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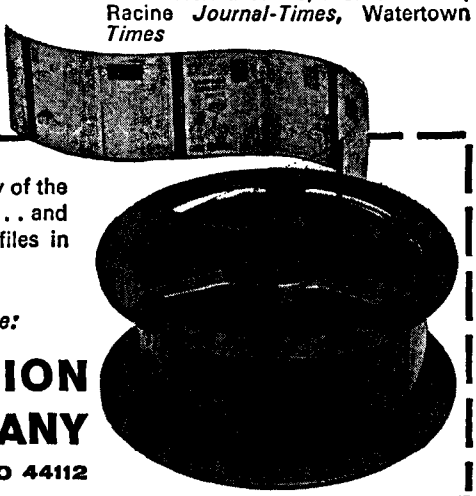

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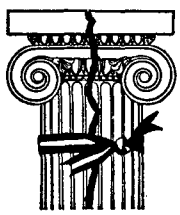

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So. . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

I am, I hope, not insensitive to any of the arts. I have spent happy hours in museums, and I listen with pleasure to Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. But I have more confidence in my ability to understand what is said in words than I have in my understanding of anything that dispenses with them. Such opinions as I hold concerning modern music or modern painting are as tentative as those I once expressed in these pages about modern architecture.

Nevertheless, as I said on that occasion, it is one of the privileges of the essayist to hold forth on subjects he doesn't know much about. Because he does not pretend to any expertness, those who know better than he what he is talking about need be no more than mildly exasperated. His misconceptions may give valuable hints to those who would set him right. If he didn't expose his obtuseness, his would-be mentors wouldn't know so well just what the misconceptions are and how they arose. An honest philistinism is easier to educate than the conscious or unconscious hypocrisy of those who admire whatever they are told that they should.

In the case of modern painting, the very fact that I can take pleasure in some of the works of yesterday's *avant-garde* but little in that of my own day suggests, even to me, that I may be merely the victim of a cultural lag. But there is no use in pretending that I am delighted by what delights me not, and I find that much serious criticism of the most recent painting is no help. Those who write it are talking over my head; they just don't start far enough back.

For instance, I read in the *Nation* that what a certain painter I had never heard of had accomplished during the war might be summarized as "an unstructured painterliness—neither expressionist nor surrealist in character, and therefore out of keeping with available alternatives." Shortly after the war "he followed through with an intimation of the picture facade as its own reason for being, preferring a unitary sensation, by being irregularly blotted out by masses that kept on pushing at, and disappearing past, the perimeters. Executed on a vastness of scale quite unprecedented in easel painting (which he was in any event attacking), these paintings sidestep drawing and the illusion of spatial recession without ever giving the impression of evasiveness. The result was a sense of the picture surface—now extraordinarily flattened—as a kind of wall whereby constricted elements no longer had any exclusive formal relationship with one another."

When I read things like that my first impulse is to exclaim, "If that young man expresses himself in terms too deep for me . . ." But then I realize the possibility that the words do say something to those whose visual perceptions are better trained than mine. I am at best a second grader, still struggling with the multiplication table, who has wandered into a seminar at the Institute for Advanced Studies.

When, therefore, I happened to see an advertisement of the Book-of-the-Month Club explaining that the Metropolitan Museum of Art had been persuaded to

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prepare a twelve-part seminar on art, which could be subscribed to for "only $60," I had the feeling that this might very well be getting down to my level. The advertisement was adorned by reproductions of two contrasting pictures: one of the Metropolitan's own "Storm" (or "Paul and Virginia") by Pierre Cot, and the other of a swirling abstraction. "Which of these is a good painting?" demanded the headline. My immediate answer was "Neither." And I was not too much discouraged by the fact that I was pretty sure this was not the right answer.

I think I know at least some of the reasons why "The Storm" is not one of the great masterpieces—even though some supposedly competent expert must have once paid a whopping price for it. On the other hand, I had not the slightest idea why the abstraction was good or even just not quite as bad as the supposedly horrid example facing it.

I confess that I did not subscribe to the seminars. But I did borrow a set from an acquaintance who had done so, and I must report that I did understand what the Metropolitan people were saying as I had not understood the *Nation* critic. But I was not by any means wholly convinced. Many years ago I read Roger Fry on "Significant Form" and the terrible-tempered Albert Barnes on *The Art in Painting*. I found nothing in the Metropolitan seminar that was not this doctrine somewhat updated, and I was no more convinced than I had been by the earlier critics that what they were talking about was indeed the only thing in painting worth talking about, or that significant form by itself (if that is possible) was as good as, if not better than, classical paintings in which equally significant form had been imposed upon subject matters themselves interesting or moving in one way or another. In that problem lies the real crux of the matter. Granted that "composition," "significant form," or whatever you want to call it is a *sine qua non* of great painting, is it also the one thing necessary? Is it *the* art in painting or only *an* art in painting? My mentors from the Metropolitan are by no means fanatical. They never themselves insist that subject matter, or the communication of an emotion in connection with it, is irrelevant in judging a picture. But unless my memory fails me, they never really face the question of the extent to which the painter who abandons the suggestion of a subject matter is to that extent lesser than one who at the same time tells a story, reveals a character or communicates an attitude.

The hopeful student is confronted at the very beginning with what seems to me this unanswered question. He is warned that "Whistler's Mother" was called by the artist "Arrangement in Grey and Black"—and let that be a lesson to you. You may think that your enjoyment of the picture derives from its "appealing likeness of the author's mother and from sentimental associations with old age," but "the *real* [italics in the original] subject is something else . . . We may ask whether the picture would be just as effective if we omitted the subject altogether . . . the abstract school of contemporary painting argues that subject matter is only something that gets in the way. It confuses the issue—the issue being pure expression by means of color, texture, line and shape existing in their own right and representing nothing at all."

Throughout the course, stress is laid again and again on the comparison between two seemingly very different pictures said to be similar, although I don't think they are ever said to be identical. For instance, Vermeer's "The Artist and His Studio" is compared with Picasso's "The Studio." "Picasso," I am told, "had sacrificed . . . the interest inherent in the objects comprising the picture . . . the fascination and variety of natural textures . . . the harmonies of flowing light, the satisfaction of building solid forms out of light and shape. What has he gained? . . . Complete freedom to manipulate the forms of his picture . . . The abstractionist would argue that the enjoyment of a picture like Picasso's 'The Studio' is more intense because it is purer than the enjoyment we take in Vermeer."

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Is "purer" the right adjective? Is it purer or merely thinner? To me the answer is quite plain and the same as that given to the proponents of pure poetry who argued that poetry is essentially only sound so that the most beautiful single line in French literature is Racine's *"La fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé,"* not because the genealogy of Phèdre was interesting but just because the sound of the words is delightful. The sound of "O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!" is also delightful but I don't think it as good as, for instance, "No spring, nor summer beauty hath such grace,/ As I have seen in one autumnal face."

It is all very well to say that two pictures as different as those by Vermeer and Picasso are somewhat similar in composition and that to this extent they produce a somewhat similar effect. But to say that the total experience of the two is not vastly different is, so it seems to me, pure nonsense and so is the statement that the two experiences are equally rich.

The author of the seminar session just quoted seems himself to think so when he writes: "But we also contend that a painting is a projection of the personality of the man who painted it, and a statement of the philosophy of the age that produced it."

If that is true, then the painter who claims to be "painting nothing but paint" is either a very deficient painter or is, perhaps without knowing it, projecting his personality and making a statement of a philosophy of the age that produced it. He is doing that just as truly and just as inevitably as Whistler was doing more than an arrangement in black and grey. And if that also is true, then the way to understand what is most meaningful and significant in any modern painting is to ask what it is that the painter, consciously or not, is revealing about his personality and about the age that finds his philosophy and his personality congenial.

At least that much seems often to be admitted by admiring critics of certain painters not fully abstract but who seem to be interested primarily in pure form. Take, for instance, the case of Ferdinand Léger and his reduction of the whole visible world, including human beings, to what looks like mechanical drawings. Are they examples of pure form meaning nothing but themselves? Certainly they are not always so considered by admirers. When the painter died in 1955 the distinguished critic André Chastel wrote:

> From 1910 on, his views of cities with smoke-like zinc, his country scenes inspired as if by a woodchopper, his still lifes made as if of metal, clearly showed what always remained his inspiration: the maximum hardening of a world of objects, which he made firmer and more articulate than they are in reality. Sacrifice of color and nuance was total and line was defined with severity and a well-meaning aggressiveness, projecting his violent, cold Norman temperament. This revolution he consecrated himself to seemed rather simple—the exaltation of the machine age, which after 1920 dominated the western world.

To me it seems equally plain that even those who profess to paint nothing but paint are in fact doing a great deal more because they would not find anything of the sort to be the real aim of painting unless they had certain attitudes toward nature, toward society and toward man. What that attitude is cannot, I think, be very well defined without recourse to two words that I hate to use because they have become so fashionable and are so loosely tossed about. What these painters are expressing is the alienation of the existentialist. They no longer represent anything in the external world because they no longer believe that the world that exists outside of man in any way shares or supports human aspirations and values or has any meaning for him. They are determined, like the existential moralist, to go it alone. They do not believe that in nature there is anything inherently beautiful, just as the existentialist moralizer refuses to believe that there is any suggestion of moral values in the external universe. The great literature and painting of the past have almost invariably been founded upon assumptions the exact opposite of these.

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They expressed man's attempt to find beauty and meaning in an external world from which he was not alienated because he believed that both his aesthetic and his moral sense corresponded to something outside himself.

Salvador Dali (whom, in general, I do not greatly admire) once made the remark that Picasso's greatness consisted in the fact that he had destroyed one by one all the historical styles of painting. I am not sure that there is not something in that remark, and if there is, then it suggests that in many important respects Picasso is much like the workers in several branches of literature whose aim is to destroy the novel with the antinovel, the theater with the antitheater, and philosophy by philosophies that consist, like logical positivism and linguistic analysis, in a refusal to philosophize. They are all determined, as the surrealist André Breton once said he was, to "wring the neck of literature."

Having now convinced myself of all these things, I will crawl farther out on a limb and confess that I have often wondered if the new styles created by modern painters—pointillism, cubism, surrealism and the mechanism of Léger (to say nothing of op and pop)—ought not be regarded as gimmicks rather than actual styles. And to my own great astonishment I have discovered that Picasso himself believes, or did once believe, exactly that.

The luxurious French monthly *Jardin des Arts* published (March 1964) a long and laudatory article on Picasso in the course of which it cited "a text of Picasso on himself" which had been reproduced at various times but most recently in a periodical called *Le Spectacle du Monde* (November 1962). I translate as follows:

> When I was young I was possessed by the religion of great art. But, as the years passed, I realized that art as one conceived it up to the end of the 1880's was, from then on, dying, condemned, and finished and that the pretended artistic activity of today, despite all its superabundance, was nothing but a manifestation of its agony . . . Despite appearances our contemporaries have given their heart to the machine, to scientific discovery, to wealth, to the control of natural forces, and of the world . . . From that moment when art became no longer the food of the superior, the artist was able to exteriorize his talent in various sorts of experiments, in new formulae, in all kinds of caprices and fantasies, and in all the varieties of intellectual charlatanism . . .
>
> As for me, from cubism on I have satisfied these gentlemen [rich people who are looking for something extravagant] and the critics also with all the many bizarre notions which have come into my head and the less they understood the more they admired them . . . Today, as you know, I am famous and rich. But when I am alone with my soul, I haven't the courage to consider myself as an artist. In the great and ancient sense of that word, Greco, Titian, Rembrandt and Goya were great painters. I am only the entertainer of a public which understands its age.

Chirico is another modern painter who has said something very much like this. But enough of quotations. And to me it seems that Picasso said all that I have been trying to say, namely, that a picture somehow involved with the world of reality outside man is more valuable than one that has nothing to say about anything except the painter himself. What he calls painters "in the great and ancient sense of that word" were able to be such only because they were not alienated existentialists.

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The Reach of Imagination

J. BRONOWSKI

FOR THREE THOUSAND YEARS, poets have been enchanted and moved and perplexed by the power of their own imagination. In a short and summary essay I can hope at most to lift one small corner of that mystery; and yet it is a critical corner. I shall ask, What goes on in the mind when we imagine? You will hear from me that one answer to this question is fairly specific: which is to say, that we can describe the working of the imagination. And when we describe it as I shall do, it becomes plain that imagination is a specifically *human* gift. To imagine is the characteristic act, not of the poet's mind, or the painter's, or the scientist's, but of the mind of man.

My stress here on the word *human* implies that there is a clear difference in this between the actions of men and those of other animals. Let me then start with a classical experiment with animals and children which Walter Hunter thought out in Chicago about 1910. That was the time when scientists were agog with the success of Ivan Pavlov in forming and changing the reflex actions of dogs, which Pavlov had first announced in 1903. Pavlov had been given a Nobel prize the next year, in 1904; although in fairness I should say that the award did not cite his work on the conditioned reflex, but on the digestive glands.

Hunter duly trained some dogs and other animals on Pavlov's lines. They were taught that when a light came on over one of three tunnels out of their cage, that tunnel would be open; they could escape down it, and were rewarded with food if they did. But once he had fixed that conditioned reflex, Hunter added to it a deeper idea: he gave the mechanical experiment a new di-

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mension, literally—the dimension of time. Now he no longer let the dog go to the lighted tunnel at once; instead, he put out the light, and then kept the dog waiting a little while before he let him go. In this way Hunter timed how long an animal can remember where he has last seen the signal light to his escape route.

The results were and are staggering. A dog or a rat forgets which one of three tunnels has been lit up within a matter of seconds—in Hunter's experiment, ten seconds at most. If you want such an animal to do much better than this, you must make the task much simpler: you must face him with only two tunnels to choose from. Even so, the best that Hunter could do was to have a dog remember for five minutes which one of two tunnels had been lit up.

I am not quoting these times as if they were exact and universal: they surely are not. Hunter's experiment, more than fifty years old now, had many faults of detail. For example, there were too few animals, they were oddly picked, and they did not all behave consistently. It may be unfair to test a dog for what he *saw,* when he commonly follows his nose rather than his eyes. It may be unfair to test any animal in the unnatural setting of a laboratory cage. And there are higher animals, such as chimpanzees and other primates, which certainly have longer memories than the animals that Hunter tried.

Yet when all these provisos have been made (and met, by more modern experiments) the facts are still startling and characteristic. An animal cannot recall a signal from the past for even a short fraction of the time that a man can—for even a short fraction of the time that a child can. Hunter made comparable tests with six-year-old children, and found, of course, that they were incomparably better than the best of his animals. There is a striking and basic difference between a man's ability to imagine something that he saw or experienced, and an animal's failure.

Animals make up for this by other and extraordinary gifts. The salmon and the carrier pigeon can find their way home as we cannot; they have, as it were, a practical memory that man cannot match. But their actions always depend on some form of habit: on instinct or on learning, which reproduce by rote a

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train of known responses. They do not depend, as human memory does, on calling to mind the recollection of absent things.

Where is it that the animal falls short? We get a clue to the answer, I think, when Hunter tells us how the animals in his experiment tried to fix their recollection. They most often pointed themselves at the light before it went out, as some gun dogs point rigidly at the game they scent—and get the name *pointer* from the posture. The animal makes ready to act by building the signal into its action. There is a primitive imagery in its stance, it seems to me; it is as if the animal were trying to fix the light in its mind by fixing it in its body. And indeed, how else can a dog mark and (as it were) name one of three tunnels, when he has no such words as *left* and *right,* and no such numbers as *one, two, three?* The directed gesture of attention and readiness is perhaps the only symbolic device that the dog commands to hold on to the past, and thereby to guide himself into the future.

I used the verb *to imagine* a moment ago, and now I have some ground for giving it a meaning. *To imagine* means to make images and to move them about inside one's head in new arrangements. When you and I recall the past, we imagine it in this direct and homely sense. The tool that puts the human mind ahead of the animal is imagery. For us, memory does not demand the preoccupation that it demands in animals, and it lasts immensely longer, because we fix it in images or other substitute symbols. With the same symbolic vocabulary we spell out the future—not one but many futures, which we weigh one against another.

I am using the word *image* in a wide meaning, which does not restrict it to the mind's eye as a visual organ. An image in my usage is what Charles Peirce called a *sign,* without regard for its sensory quality. Peirce distinguished between different forms of signs, but there is no reason to make his distinction here, for the imagination works equally with them all, and that is why I call them all images.

Indeed, the most important images for human beings are simply words, which are abstract symbols. Animals do not have words, in our sense: there is no specific center for language in

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the brain of any animal, as there is in the human brain. In this respect at least we know that the human imagination depends on a configuration in the brain that has only evolved in the last one or two million years. In the same period, evolution has greatly enlarged the front lobes in the human brain, which govern the sense of the past and the future; and it is a fair guess that they are probably the seat of our other images. (Part of the evidence for this guess is that damage to the front lobes in primates reduces them to the state of Hunter's animals.) If the guess turns out to be right, we shall know why man has come to look like a highbrow or an egghead: because otherwise there would not be room in his head for his imagination.

The images play out for us events which are not present to our senses, and thereby guard the past and create the future—a future that does not yet exist, and may never come to exist in that form. By contrast, the lack of symbolic ideas, or their rudimentary poverty, cuts off an animal from the past and the future alike, and imprisons him in the present. Of all the distinctions between man and animal, the characteristic gift which makes us human is the power to work with symbolic images: the gift of imagination.

This is really a remarkable finding. When Philip Sidney in 1580 defended poets (and all unconventional thinkers) from the Puritan charge that they were liars, he said that a maker must imagine things that are not. Halfway between Sidney and us, William Blake said, "What is now proved was once only imagin'd." About the same time, in 1796, Samuel Taylor Coleridge for the first time distinguished between the passive fancy and the active imagination, "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception." Now we see that they were right, and precisely right: the human gift is the gift of imagination—and that is not just a literary phrase.

Nor is it just a literary gift; it is, I repeat, characteristically human. Almost everything that we do that is worth doing is done in the first place in the mind's eye. The richness of human life is that we have many lives; we live the events that do not happen (and some that cannot) as vividly as those that do; and if thereby we die a thousand deaths, that is the price we pay for living a

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thousand lives. (A cat, of course, has only nine.) Literature is alive to us because we live its images, but so is any play of the mind—so is chess: the lines of play that we foresee and try in our heads and dismiss are as much a part of the game as the moves that we make. John Keats said that the unheard melodies are sweeter, and all chess players sadly recall that the combinations that they planned and which never came to be played were the best.

I make this point to remind you, insistently, that imagination is the manipulation of images in one's head; and that the rational manipulation belongs to that, as well as the literary and artistic manipulation. When a child begins to play games with things that stand for other things, with chairs or chessmen, he enters the gateway to reason and imagination together. For the human reason discovers new relations between things not by deduction, but by that unpredictable blend of speculation and insight that scientists call induction, which—like other forms of imagination—cannot be formalized. We see it at work when Walter Hunter inquires into a child's memory, as much as when Blake and Coleridge do. Only a restless and original mind would have asked Hunter's questions and could have conceived his experiments, in a science that was dominated by Pavlov's reflex arcs and was heading toward the behaviorism of John Watson.

Let me find a spectacular example for you from history. What is the most famous experiment that you had described to you as a child? I will hazard that it is the experiment that Galileo is said to have made in Sidney's age, in Pisa about 1590, by dropping two unequal balls from the Leaning Tower. There, we say, is a man in the modern mold, a man after our own hearts: he insisted on questioning the authority of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, and seeing with his own eyes whether (as they said) the heavy ball would reach the ground before the light one. Seeing is believing.

Yet seeing is also imagining. Galileo did challenge the authority of Aristotle, and he did look hard at his mechanics. But the eye that Galileo used was the mind's eye. He did not drop balls from the Leaning Tower of Pisa—and if he had, he would have got a very doubtful answer. Instead, Galileo made an imaginary experiment in his head, which I will describe as he did

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years later in the book he wrote after the Holy Office silenced him: the *Discorsi . . . intorno à due nuove scienze,* which was smuggled out to be printed in the Netherlands in 1638.

Suppose, said Galileo, that you drop two unequal balls from the tower at the same time. And suppose that Aristotle is right—suppose that the heavy ball falls faster, so that it steadily gains on the light ball, and hits the ground first. Very well. Now imagine the same experiment done again, with only one difference: this time the two unequal balls are joined by a string between them. The heavy ball will again move ahead, but now the light ball holds it back and acts as a drag or brake. So the light ball will be speeded up and the heavy ball will be slowed down; they must reach the ground together because they are tied together, but they cannot reach the ground as quickly as the heavy ball alone. Yet the string between them has turned the two balls into a single mass which is heavier than either ball—and surely (according to Aristotle) this mass should therefore move faster than either ball? Galileo's imaginary experiment has uncovered a contradiction; he says trenchantly,

> You see how, from your assumption that a heavier body falls more rapidly than a lighter one, I infer that a (still) heavier body falls more slowly.

There is only one way out of the contradiction: the heavy ball and the light ball must fall at the same rate, so that they go on falling at the same rate when they are tied together.

This argument is not conclusive, for nature might be more subtle (when the two balls are joined) than Galileo has allowed. And yet it is something more important: it is suggestive, it is stimulating, it opens a new view—in a word, it is imaginative. It cannot be settled without an actual experiment, because nothing that we imagine can become knowledge until we have translated it into, and backed it by, real experience. The test of imagination is experience. But then, that is as true of literature and the arts as it is of science. In science, the imaginary experiment is tested by confronting it with physical experience; and in literature, the imaginative conception is tested by confronting it with human experience. The superficial speculation in science is dismissed because it is found to falsify nature; and the shallow

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work of art is discarded because it is found to be untrue to our own nature. So when Ella Wheeler Wilcox died in 1919, more people were reading her verses than Shakespeare's; yet in a few years her work was dead. It had been buried by its poverty of emotion and its trivialness of thought: which is to say that it had been proved to be as false to the nature of man as, say, Jean Baptiste Lamarck and Trofim Lysenko were false to the nature of inheritance. The strength of the imagination, its enriching power and excitement, lies in its interplay with reality—physical and emotional.

I doubt if there is much to choose here between science and the arts: the imagination is not much more free, and not much less free, in one than in the other. All great scientists have used their imagination freely, and let it ride them to outrageous conclusions without crying "Halt!" Albert Einstein fiddled with imaginary experiments from boyhood, and was wonderfully ignorant of the facts that they were supposed to bear on. When he wrote the first of his beautiful papers on the random movement of atoms, he did not know that the Brownian motion which it predicted could be seen in any laboratory. He was sixteen when he invented the paradox that he resolved ten years later, in 1905, in the theory of relativity, and it bulked much larger in his mind than the experiment of Albert Michelson and Edward Morley which had upset every other physicist since 1881. All his life Einstein loved to make up teasing puzzles like Galileo's, about falling lifts and the detection of gravity; and they carry the nub of the problems of general relativity on which he was working.

Indeed, it could not be otherwise. The power that man has over nature and himself, and that a dog lacks, lies in his command of imaginary experience. He alone has the symbols which fix the past and play with the future, possible and impossible. In the Renaissance, the symbolism of memory was thought to be mystical, and devices that were invented as mnemonics (by Giordano Bruno, for example, and by Robert Fludd) were interpreted as magic signs. The symbol is the tool which gives man his power, and it is the same tool whether the symbols are images or words, mathematical signs or mesons. And the symbols have a reach and a roundness that goes beyond their literal and practical

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meaning. They are the rich concepts under which the mind gathers many particulars into one name, and many instances into one general induction. When a man says *left* and *right,* he is outdistancing the dog not only in looking for a light; he is setting in train all the shifts of meaning, the overtones and the ambiguities, between *gauche* and *adroit* and *dexterous,* between *sinister* and the sense of right. When a man counts *one, two, three,* he is not only doing mathematics; he is on the path to the mysticism of numbers in Pythagoras and Vitruvius and Kepler, to the Trinity and the signs of the Zodiac.

I have described imagination as the ability to make images and to move them about inside one's head in new arrangements. This is the faculty that is specifically human, and it is the common root from which science and literature both spring and grow and flourish together. For they do flourish (and languish) together; the great ages of science are the great ages of all the arts, because in them powerful minds have taken fire from one another, breathless and higgledy-piggledy, without asking too nicely whether they ought to tie their imagination to falling balls or a haunted island. Galileo and Shakespeare, who were born in the same year, grew into greatness in the same age; when Galileo was looking through his telescope at the moon, Shakespeare was writing *The Tempest;* and all Europe was in ferment, from Johannes Kepler to Peter Paul Rubens, and from the first table of logarithms by John Napier to the Authorised Version of the Bible.

Let me end with a last and spirited example of the common inspiration of literature and science, because it is as much alive today as it was three hundred years ago. What I have in mind is man's ageless fantasy, to fly to the moon. I do not display this to you as a high scientific enterprise; on the contrary, I think we have more important discoveries to make here on earth than wait for us, beckoning, at the horned surface of the moon. Yet I cannot belittle the fascination which that ice-blue journey has had for the imagination of men, long before it drew us to our television screens to watch the tumbling of astronauts. Plutarch and Lucian, Ariosto and Ben Jonson wrote about it, before the days of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells and science fiction. The

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seventeenth century was heady with new dreams and fables about voyages to the moon. Kepler wrote one full of deep scientific ideas, which (alas) simply got his mother accused of witchcraft. In England, Francis Godwin wrote a wild and splendid work, *The Man in the Moone,* and the astronomer John Wilkins wrote a wild and learned one, *The Discovery of a New World.* They did not draw a line between science and fancy; for example, they all tried to guess just where in the journey the earth's gravity would stop. Only Kepler understood that gravity has no boundary, and put a law to it—which happened to be the wrong law.

All this was a few years before Isaac Newton was born, and it was all in his head that day in 1666 when he sat in his mother's garden, a young man of twenty-three, and thought about the reach of gravity. This was how he came to conceive his brilliant image, that the moon is like a ball which has been thrown so hard that it falls exactly as fast as the horizon, all the way round the earth. The image will do for any satellite, and Newton modestly calculated how long therefore an astronaut would take to fall round the earth once. He made it ninety minutes, and we have all seen now that he was right; but Newton had no way to check that. Instead he went on to calculate how long in that case the distant moon would take to round the earth, if indeed it behaves like a thrown ball that falls in the earth's gravity, and if gravity obeyed a law of inverse squares. He found that the answer would be twenty-eight days.

In that telling figure, the imagination that day chimed with nature, and made a harmony. We shall hear an echo of that harmony on the day when we land on the moon, because it will be not a technical but an imaginative triumph, that reaches back to the beginning of modern science and literature both. All great acts of imagination are like this, in the arts and in science, and convince us because they fill out reality with a deeper sense of rightness. We start with the simplest vocabulary of images, with *left* and *right* and *one, two, three,* and before we know how it happened the words and the numbers have conspired to make a match with nature: we catch in them the pattern of mind and matter as one.

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Student Politics in a Democratic Society

NATHAN GLAZER

TEN YEARS AGO our topic would have been a very bland one indeed. At that time the wave of serious G. I. student veterans had already passed through the schools; students were seen as passive, uninvolved, uninterested in society, and concerned only for their own careers and their own security. The most influential descriptions of the students of the mid-fifties were, I believe, those of David Riesman, who described their premature caution in questioning the recruiting agents of corporations about pension and retirement plans. If anyone had raised then the question of the role of students in a democratic society, it could only have been to answer that their role should be larger; that students should concern themselves more with public affairs, with the large problems of society, should involve themselves in social and political action.

But after the revolutionary role played by Southern Negro students and Northern white students in the South, after the explosion at Berkeley in which students overthrew the administration of one of the country's great universities, who could simply repeat these platitudes, and not feel forced to examine the question closely, considering not only the impact of student political involvement on society, but on one of the major institutions of society itself, the college and university?

Let me try to describe in order three positions on the role of the student in a democratic society, and to analyze their content and their consequences.

The first position is the simplest and the most cautious. It is

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that the student should learn about all the problems of the society and in effect prepare himself to act in the society. This on the face of it would seem to be an inevitable and necessary part of the education of the student, and it would seem reasonable that all those who accept the underlying premises of higher education, and who assume it has more than purely vocational and training functions, would accept this point of view. Unfortunately, as we know, this has not always been the case. In America, our universities have a very distinctive form: they are run by trustees, public and private, not by faculty, and not by students. And we have a long history of interference by trustees in the running of the university—private trustees and public trustees. Certain ideas—arguments in favor of socialism or communism, arguments in favor of full racial equality, criticisms of the American economic system and its capacity to create the best society, criticisms of America's foreign policy and participation in war—are capable of arousing violent and emotional reactions. These reactions are one of the permanent dangers of a democratic system. They lead the powerful to interfere in the teaching function of the university; and they lead the people to interfere, too, through their legislators. If the people were in a position to act directly on their feelings all of the time, democracy, we know from various studies, would be in very bad shape.

Substantial majorities of the American people are against having atheists or even Socialists teach in American universities. Concerning Communists, there is an even more overwhelming rejection. Sidney Hook and others have made a powerful case on intellectual grounds against allowing Communists to teach, because they are under discipline and cannot teach the truth as they see it. I believe this argument is somewhat exaggerated, certainly when it comes to Communist teachers of mathematics and science, and even when it comes to Communist teachers of humanities and the social sciences, where Communist doctrines have a more immediate impact. Someone who is formally under discipline is not under discipline at all times and for all purposes. If this were the case, Catholics might also be considered unqualified to be university teachers. And additionally, one might argue against this position that Communists change; even

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in the Communist world there is today an argument going on over the limits of freedom.

So even the position that the university is a place in which students are freely prepared to play an active role as citizens in the world is itself always, in most places, and in some measure, controversial. This controversy breaks out when the university administration—either in its own right or under the pressure of trustees and of public opinion—limits students' access to certain ideas. Must everything be taught in the university? Of course not, and there is no easy way to ensure that it should. But when a group of teachers feels that they should add someone to their number who is qualified to teach, and who expounds either in the course of his teaching or outside the classroom unpopular ideas, I think no one should interfere to prevent such an appointment. If a group of students or professors feels they want to listen to someone speak on the campus, no one should prevent them from having that opportunity. This is the position that the university teachers of America have developed, and despite the fact that this is the mildest form in which students participate in a democratic society, we know that it is continually threatened.

There still remain serious problems when we consider this relatively simple form of participation. Does the university have the right to require that faculty members guide student groups and approve their action in inviting off-campus speakers? Does the university have the right to require that one view presented on campus be balanced by another? Does the university have the right to require that questions be allowed at meetings? Does the university have the right to require that faculty members chair meetings? Does the university have the right to decide where in the university a meeting shall be held, thus limiting effectively the size of the audience? Does it have the right to require student groups to pay for police protection, if the off-campus speaker is so controversial that disorder or violence may be feared? Must the university provide loudspeakers for the speaker? May the university deny the most prominent locations on the campus to the speaker?

These are all real questions at Berkeley, questions that have been debated endlessly, and that have mostly been answered, "no." Even when we raise an apparently unobjectionable prin-

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ciple—the right to be informed and educated about the chief issues and positions in conflict in society, the right to be prepared to be a citizen—we cannot answer all questions on the basis of the application of a simple principle and simple rule alone. Any principle, when it becomes absolute, brings other principles into question.

On most campuses the answer to the questions I have raised has been "yes." That is, it is agreed that the university does have the right to restrict in various ways, and by the setting of various rules, the freedom to hear a variety of opinions expressed on campus. If these rules exist in order to restrict the freedom to be informed, to learn, then there is no question that they violate the chief function of a university. But there is another ground on which such rules are imposed and defended—the ground that the university has a duty to ensure the broad education of the students. This duty requires that faculty supervise in some manner the activities of student organizations, that the university ensure that there is free discussion and the presentation of alternative views, and even that the university, through the assignment of facilities for speakers, consider the overall educational impact of the pattern of speakers and the degree of their prominence. Thus, one could argue, on educational grounds, that the university should be concerned if the only points of view on our military involvement in Vietnam presented on campus are critical of American policy. But if there is such a concern, what is the proper form of procedure? Does the university encourage student groups who support American policy to form and present programs? Does it sponsor its own programs? Does it restrict the activities of the critics? These are all real questions, and real possibilities—once again, they become more evident on politically active campuses than on others.

On these questions, just as on the questions of free speech generally, there are many disputed marginal areas, and in our society we have developed forms for the settlement of these marginal cases—principally courts of law. Once one raises these issues seriously and passionately on the campus, however, the question that properly arises is: what forms exist to settle such matters? The decisions of the state legislature? The board of trustees?

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The president? The faculty? Or the students themselves? It is because on a politically active campus such as Berkeley the question of the limit of free speech and political activity is continually raised, and we have frequent conflicts between the vital principle of free speech and such other principles as public order and the primacy of educational objectives, that the question of the rules, how they are set and who sets them, has become so important.

Thus, even such a mild and apparently cautious formulation of the student's role in a democratic society as the one I have first posed—that the student should be prepared to act better as a citizen—raises serious questions for a university. How much more serious then are the questions raised by the next position, which is rather stronger. The second position is that the student should actively participate in the political and social conflicts of the society. The argument here is that first, society needs him—the student is better educated, less bound by responsibility of occupation and family, more generous and more flexible in his political and social attitudes, than other citizens. And the argument continues, the student needs action in society to make his education really complete. Certainly it is easy for us to find examples that support both arguments. The part of my own college education that was most vital, most important to me, was participation in a radical student political organization. I learned not only how to speak, how to write, how to edit a newspaper, how to organize a conference—and these are all valuable skills; I also learned an ideology. Certainly the way I learned it was not the way I would want to teach anyone—for I learned in a political organization, not a university, and I was indoctrinated rather than taught. And yet on the basis of further experience in the world, the indoctrination wore off. It became possible for me to learn then how indoctrination itself works, why at one stage in one's life one is ready to believe what, in the course of further experience, one rejects as nonsense.

This is a fairly extreme form of participation. But the participation of students in the work of political parties, in the work of social and political organizations, can add a dimension to their education that is quite beyond the power of the classroom and the teacher. A university should not limit such participation. In-

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deed, I believe many universities should find ways to encourage such participation, despite all the difficulties such encouragement might bring. Thus, I think universities might well grant time off and perhaps even credit for participation in political campaigns, although I imagine this would be easier for small private colleges than for large state-supported institutions. It would not do to have it turn out that more students were supporting the campaigns of one party than of another!

I have said too that society needs this participation. And it is scarcely necessary to spell this out in the South, where to my mind the greatest and healthiest change that has occurred since the Civil War has been brought about by the activism, the heroism, of students, South and North. The South was and is still in large measure afflicted by the terrible contradictions between the principles of democracy and equality and the reality of the treatment of the Negro, both officially and unofficially. The rest of the country remained in large measure ignorant or unmoved by these injustices. It was students, unencumbered by adult responsibilities and rationalizations, committed to a greater justice and equality, who played a significant role in bringing long-maintained injustices to the attention of the nation, and in overturning them.

To my mind two problems are raised by the position that the student should participate, for his good and for the good of society, in the social and political conflicts of his time. The first problem is presented by the fact that the participation of the students may be so energetic and effective that powerful forces in the society will move against the university. I do not in the slightest suggest that the antagonism of powerful forces who are the targets of student actions should be a sufficient reason for the university to restrict this action. Yet in the concrete situations in which colleges and universities are placed, this is a serious problem indeed. At certain times in recent years the presidents and boards of trustees of Negro colleges in the South have moved against students who have engaged in political action off the campus. The dilemma of these administrators must be understood. They feared that if they allowed the students to continue to participate in demonstrations they would draw upon their in-

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stitutions the enmity of governors and state legislatures, see their budgets cut, and perhaps worse. Thus they faced the tragic choice between maintaining the growth of their institutions and curbing their students, or allowing their students to participate in off-campus political activity and facing loss of necessary support.

This, in a far less serious form, was also one of the problems faced by the administration of the University of California. Many hundreds of California students had been active in sit-ins, clearly illegal, undertaken in San Francisco during the 1963-64 academic year. The targets of these demonstrations were the hiring practices of San Francisco businessmen. From the point of view of the businessmen, as taxpayers and citizens of California, the business of the students was to study in the university that the state's taxpayers had so lavishly equipped. Many citizens and government and law enforcement officials were angered by the sit-ins. Many people demanded that the university restrict the off-campus political activities of its students. President Kerr answered that what the students did off campus was their business, and the university could not be responsible for them. It would not discipline them; neither would it protect them or intercede for them if they got into trouble for breaking the law.

This seemed at the time a clear and strong position. But even this position, I believe, cannot be maintained unequivocally. In the course of the following year, the year of the student uprising on the Berkeley campus to protest restrictions on their freedom to engage in political activities on campus, a second problem became evident in the position that urges students to participate in community politics.

All through that tense year, the student political leaders insisted that they could not be held responsible for any off-campus political action, legal or illegal, because that would affect their constitutional rights. But after campus sit-ins and arrests, after the faculty had voted overwhelmingly in support of the student position, after endless meetings and consultations, the rules at the university still assert that a student *may* be held responsible for off-campus actions. Was it only because of the stubbornness of the regents of the university that this principle is still maintained in the rules—although no action has been taken

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under it against students? I do not believe so, although certainly their stubbornness is important. It is rather that as the range of political action has widened to include not only illegal actions to test the constitutionality of laws, but illegal actions to force public officials and private citizens to accept the views of certain groups, and illegal actions to extend the realm of permissible moral behavior—as this expansion of the traditional notion of permissible political behavior has widened, it has become increasingly clear that there is a limit at which the university may and should discipline students for off-campus behavior. This has long been clear in the case of standard college fun and games, brutal hazings, destructive pranks, and so on. These are now less common than they were. But politics may take over where the fraternities and football rallies left off. The question then arises, should the term "political" cover and exempt every action that students undertake under that name?

I am convinced that the university—in any case, the American university—cannot accept the principle that it is indifferent to the actions of its students off the campus, that it is indifferent to the character of its students, and that any action they perform will be left to the civil arm to handle. For the university is also based on certain principles—respect for ideas, freedom of speech and inquiry, the elimination of prejudice and intolerance; and it is possible for student actions in the community to undermine and attack these principles. At that point, the university cannot be indifferent to the actions of its students.

The problem here is that the university will often be urged by the pressure of its contributors and supporters, by the citizens of the state, by legislators and governors, to act against students who engage in political and social actions in the community. Its own interests may often lead it to restrict student rights, claiming it is doing so to maintain the authority of the administration, the order of the campus and the very principles that are necessary for higher education. There are serious dangers involved in the principle that, at the margin, student actions in the community may be a basis for university action against them. For students should be free to experiment, to make mistakes, to expand the area of political action. But the danger that students will be re-

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stricted to quiet public opinion should not lead us to deny the reality that students at some times and places have in the past and may again in the future engage in actions that they will defend in the light of some political position or perspective, but that will require university action against them. If one group of students were to attack or break up the meetings of another group because of their race, religion or opinions; or if one group of students were to outrage the religious sensibilities of another group—these might well be matters for the courts, but they would also be matters for the conscience of the university. I remain convinced of this principle because it is inconceivable to me that our major private institutions, which are freer than state institutions of either student or public pressures, would ever accept the principle that the off-campus actions of their students were not subject to their concern.

The third position on the student's role in a democratic society raises the most serious considerations. Let me recall that the first position is that the student should be *prepared* to participate as a citizen in the political and social conflicts of society; the second, that he should be *encouraged* to participate even as a student in the political and social conflicts of society; the third position is that the university campus is a *key source of activists* for the various political and social positions in conflict in society. Thus, according to this position, the campus should be open to active recruitment and preparation of students for enlistment and leadership in the significant political and social camps of society.

Characteristically, the American student has not been considered fully adult, or fully mature. This has been a consequence of such factors as the role in American higher education of the need to train ministers, and, of course, seminarians have always been subjected to a severe discipline; of the influence on American higher education of the English rather than the continental model, so that students live in colleges under teachers who also act in lieu of parents; of the influence in American higher education of the characteristic location of university campuses in small towns or in the country, which has meant that the college or university has had to supply housing and has therefore had some concern with the life of the student. In view of this back-

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ground, which brings American higher education closer to the cloister or the preparatory school than to the European university, it would indeed be strange to view the university as one of the chief sources of political activists for immediate participation in the struggles that face society.

Yet as we know, in underdeveloped countries today, the universities do play this role. When the students of Vietnam or South Korea or Indonesia decide to move against their governments, those governments tremble and are indeed in jeopardy. In the more advanced states with very large urban universities—such as Japan and France—the students are also an important political force, although not so important as in the underdeveloped world. The reason is that in the advanced states, even though there are many more students, there are politically active classes that have much greater importance in the political life of society than do the students. There are organized industrialists and businessmen, an organized trade union movement, professional societies of all sorts that may take a role in politics. Under these circumstances, while the students of Japan and France may shake a government, they alone cannot overthrow one. In the underdeveloped states, on the other hand, there is a mass peasantry, a small middle class devoted to its own security, leaving the students and the army to form the chief participants in the active political life of society.

Under these circumstances, every important party must pay attention to its student base. If the Communists had succeeded in capturing the leadership of Indonesian students, there would have been no way of preventing that country from going Communist: but apparently non-Communist nationalist and Moslem elements were also strong among the students. Thus in certain nations the political outlook of students—the relative strength of certain political groups among them—is critical for the political fate of the nation.

In this country, until recently, students have been much less important politically than even in Europe. They did not develop the political activism of the students of underdeveloped countries, certainly, or of Continental Europe. And since they were not the sharply defined future elite of the country as in England

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—for here our elite has been more open and mass higher education has been a reality for generations—there was no great interest in how their political views were developing. The only political groups that have ever shown great interest in the students have been radical groups—Communists, Socialists and more recently the groups of the radical right, ideological conservatives. All these groups play a relatively minor role in American politics; they are incapable of developing any substantial support among the major social strata of the country, whether businessmen, professionals, workers, farmers, white collar workers, or what you will. Consequently they have been attracted to the campus, where in addition they may find among students the rational and ideological outlook that may make their consistent if extreme positions attractive. Thus student politics—unlike national politics—has often consisted of the conflict between radical groups.

What has all this to do with the present situation? It is my feeling that in recent years we have seen the beginnings, in a number of very different events, of the potential politicalization of the American campus. Let me point to three events.

The first is the major role that the Negro students of the South played in the last seven years in breaking the pattern of official and unofficial discrimination against the Negro. Here we had a situation similar to that which we find in the underdeveloped world. The Negro student was in a position to play a key role. The larger part of the Negro people in the South were uneducated and apathetic or beaten, and accepted their inferior role. The Negro middle class also accepted for the most part an inferior status. Just as in the underdeveloped world, the Negro students formed a class available for the political work of society, their society. Perhaps only one element in the political constellation of underdeveloped societies was missing among Negroes in the South—there was no army. So the Negro students held the field unopposed and were able to become the political leaders of their people.

There were other important political parallels between the position of the Negro in the South and the position of the people in an underdeveloped country: the formal political structure

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offered few effective means for improving it, because so many were excluded from the vote. I would say that when these three circumstances prevail: when the students are the only or the chief class available for political activity; when the problems of the nation are desperate; and when there is no effective democratic procedure for reform—under these circumstances, I believe, the students become one of the dominant political classes in society, and become the target for recruitment by the chief political forces in society.

Was the involvement of Negro students in the fight for equality only an exceptional case? For our society as a whole certainly does not show the features of an underdeveloped society; the students are not the only available class to do the political work of society; our problems are not desperate; our democracy functions, and change, even extensive and radical change, has been and can be brought about through the democratic process.

We should realize, however, that there is a growing political viewpoint in this country, the viewpoint of the New Left, which actually does see America in these terms: the New Left believes the people are corrupted by the mass media dominated by business interests, and that therefore their participation in our democracy is meaningless and ineffective; they believe the American people are corrupted by the opportunities for a high standard of living, and therefore are indifferent to the poverty and misery of most of the world and their fellow citizens as well; they believe democracy is ineffective because even those social groups that in the past have fought for the extension of equality—intellectuals and the labor movement—have been corrupted and bought by what they call the power structure, and consequently only among the students does one have the political forces potentially available for solving the problems of society, which they also see as desperate.

It is this viewpoint that has been, in a number of variants, dominant among politically active students at Berkeley and that has been to my mind at the base of the turmoil on that campus. For if the campus is a chief source of recruits, and indeed may be the salvation of the society, then every means of access to students must be exploited, and the question of the rules that gov-

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ern that access becomes crucial. For the rules may limit the number of meetings a group may hold in a week, or deprive them of loudspeakers, or of the best locations on the campus, or may deprive them of using nonstudents to aid in the political work of propaganda and recruitment.

Is Berkeley the sport, the exception, of the sixties, just as City College was the sport of the thirties? Or does it reflect some deeper underlying trends on the American campus, which are transforming the campus into one of the chief sources of political activists, one of the chief centers of political debate and decision? Certainly many observers have seen in Berkeley a portent, and they have been proved right in the spread of student demands to other campuses that have been influenced by Berkeley. But let us distinguish two rather different things that happened at Berkeley: one was a free speech movement, which involved the active participation of thousands of students, and which struck at the whole system of university rules that treated students in some ways as children and as less than citizens. These rules are to be found in universities across the country. The students also struck at the conception that students should be excluded from formulating the rules under which they live. Thus we have seen a growing demand for greater student freedom on campus—freedom not only to participate in politics but to govern their own social activities; we have also seen a growing demand for a greater student role in university government. I believe both these demands are justified. The American university still bears in too many cases the marks of its origins in the seminary, in the high school, and in the cornfields; and as adult students, who in many ways become adult earlier than their teachers and the administrators did, come into the universities, the rules must become less restrictive, and the student role in university government must become greater.

This was one aspect of the free speech movement at Berkeley, but it was closely linked to something else. A relatively small group of students, supported by large numbers of former students and prospective students, had flocked to the university primarily to make it a chief center of political creativity and activism in society. They fought against the rules not only for

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the same reasons that other students opposed them, but because the rules limited their access to students whom they wished to recruit for political activity. In addition, this struggle gave the radical leaders an opportunity to teach their view of American society to other students by attacking the rules as reflecting the restrictions, the bureaucratization and hypocrisy of that society.

This part of the Berkeley story has not been understood or told too clearly, and this part of the struggle is still going on. Thus, student and nonstudent political leaders sometimes see students as the chief force that might change the course of American policy in Vietnam. This is an ambitious perspective indeed; it is also in large measure an arrogant perspective, for it ignores the reality of a politically sophisticated society, in which many strata, many people, many groups, will have their say on Vietnam and will play a role in determining American policy there. This is also a perspective that inevitably has brought the student leaders in conflict with the university and its faculty, as they press for the widest possible opportunities to spread and indeed impose their views on the campus. Most of the faculty, despite its interest in and concern for political problems, does not favor or see as possible any such ambitious role for the university in American political life. Indeed, they fear such a role, for then the university might well lose what limited degree of distance it now has from the problems of the society.

There is unquestionably a tension—there should be a tension—between the university and society. This tension exists in the fact that the university should not take as seriously and immediately as those actively engaged in society the problems of society. It can look at these problems in historical perspective; it can try to strip these problems of the emotions that invest them; it can try new and strange and even playful alternatives, in thought and in experiment. Thus, I would argue, there is still some virtue in the independence of the university in some measure from the immediate problems of society, although these virtues are not often exploited.

This independence is threatened from a number of quarters. One threat is from the insistent demand that the university be helpful—the demand from business and government that it of-

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fer practical aid, which continually diverts the research time and teaching of universities into areas of immediate payoff. Another threat is from the vocational conception of the university. The university must prepare students for jobs—and the student demand for an immediate vocational payoff from higher education, even though there are more forms of support outside of work than there used to be, has become more and more insistent.

But the independence of the university will also be threatened by turning it into a chief center of political activity. The universities have recently played an important role in this country in making the war in Vietnam a subject of national debate—I can think of no other major issue in this country's history in which the universities have played such an important role. They have developed a means of bringing this subject to national attention that is ideally suited to the nature of the university—the teach-in, in which the problems are analyzed and a broad array of fact and analysis is brought to bear upon them. But on many campuses, on the politically most active campuses, the teach-in becomes a political weapon; when it does, speakers who support our policy in Vietnam are booed and shouted down; those who oppose our policy bring into play the most powerful emotional appeals, not in order to make the issues clearer, but to arouse the strongest possible response—in other words, they become propagandists and recruiters. At this point, the university brings nothing of its own to the discussion and understanding of our problems. Indeed, the political leaders of the New Left criticize the faculty for being insufficiently emotional in their discussion of key issues. They criticize the faculty too for its effort to maintain objectivity and its refusal to join them in a warm bath of emotion and anti-intellectual communal togetherness. This is also a danger to the university.

Thus, this third position on the student's role in a democracy raises troubling questions. I do not think the university in a democratic society ideally should be a chief target of political forces, seeking to find recruits and activists, to seize the political leadership of students, and to use student organizations and the university name as a weapon in political combat. I can envisage situations when such an all-out use of all available resources in

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society for a political struggle to prevent some great evil is necessary, and I appreciate the views of those who believe the American involvement in Vietnam presents such a threat, and thus does require us to ignore the special character of institutions in bringing all of them into the battle. I do believe the situation of the Negro in the South in the early sixties did justify the use of every resource the Negro possessed—the church, the college, the tactics of civil disobedience—to overcome the grave injustices in his position.

The same orientation, it is now argued, must affect all the universities of the country in overcoming a grave threat to American democracy. Just as enlistment in a war means that much must stop in a man's life, just as involvement in a war for a nation means it must stop building schools and hospitals, so, at least on my campus, I am told by some of our students and faculty colleagues, we must invest all the resources of the university—its students, its faculty, its classrooms, its capacity to command public attention—in the struggle against American policy in Vietnam. As I listen to these voices, I think of the problems of the past and of the problems of the future, and I see that there will always be a problem that to some will justify this mobilization of the resources of the university for some political end. There are situations when the university must indeed be mobilized in the defense of human ends, must become a seat of struggle, with all that means for the independence of the university, for which so many hard struggles have been fought, and which even today is achieved only in measure in some universities. I do not believe we face such a situation in this country today. I think our democracy does function, even if with many difficulties; many of our people are alert to our problems; and there are many hands willing to take up the necessary political work of society. Under these circumstances, I believe that the first two positions I have described form a sound basis for answering the question, what is the student's political role in a democracy? He should be prepared for a political role, he should learn from involvement in political activity—but he should not try to transform his university into a bastion and base of political activity.

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To a Scholar in the Stacks

HOWARD NEMEROV

When you began your story all its words
Had long been written down, its elements
Already so cohered in such exact
Equations that there should have seemed to be
No place to go, no entrance to the maze.
A heart less bold would have refused to start,
A mind less ignorant would have stayed home.

For Pasiphaë already had conceived
And borne her bully boy, and Daedalus
Responding had designed the darkness in
Its mystical divisions; Theseus,
Before you came, descended and returned,
By means of the thread, many and many a time.
What was there that had not been always done?

And still, when you began, only because
You did begin, the way opened before you.
The pictured walls made room, received your life;
Pasiphaë frowned, the Sea King greeted you,
And sighing Ariadne gave the thread
As always; in that celebrated scene
You were alone in being alone and new.

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And now? You have gone down, you have gone in,
You have become incredibly rich and wise
From wandering underground. And yet you weary
And disbelieve, daring the Minotaur
Who answers in the echoes of your voice,
Holding the thread that has no other end,
Speaking her name whom you abandoned long ago.

Then out of this what revelation comes?
Sometimes in darkness and in deep despair
You will remember, Theseus, that you were
The Minotaur, the Labyrinth and the thread
Yourself; even you were that ingener
That fled the maze and flew—so long ago—
Over the sunlit sea to Sicily.

✪ *Journal of the Fictive Life* is HOWARD NEMEROV's most recent book. Among Mr. Nemerov's other books are *Poetry and Fiction, Next Room of the Dream, Mirrors and Windows: Poems* and *New and Selected Poems.* He teaches at Brandeis University.

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The Seventh Fold

J. Donald Adams

Deep in the intricate country of the mind
I took a twisting path that led me,
Stumbling, to a wind-wracked hill.
Those thickets I had passed through,
Tangled, briery, tough to break,
And swampy, sometimes, underfoot—
Were well behind now, lost to sight,
And at the moment, lost to mind.
The hill I'd reached was high enough
To look on distances that dropped away,
Fold upon fold,
Melting, far to westward, into a dim horizon.
They beckoned,
And my feet, so heavy as I had begun
To climb the hill,
Were now uplifted to a lighter pace.
What land is this, I asked in taking breath?
What lies beyond that seventh fold?
Take heart, I told myself; go farther on.

✪ J. DONALD ADAMS edited the *New York Times Book Review* from 1925 until 1943, and then, until 1964, contributed its weekly *Speaking of Books* column. He is the author, among other books, of *The Magic and Mystery of Words* and *Speaking of Books—and Life.*

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Is the Church Obsolete?

The Crisis of Religion in a Secular Age

WILLIAM ROBERT MILLER

HERESY IS A FIGHTING WORD. To the orthodox it means error and connotes a threat to true doctrine. To the rebel, just because it is the bane of orthodoxy, it signifies a proclamation of truth. If orthodoxy stands for corruption, oppression, obscurity and the like, the heretic must be a bringer of enlightenment, so the reasoning goes.

We have only recently emerged from an era in which these concepts were not merely tags for opponents in a debate. For centuries men have been tortured and massacred for heresy, and even in very recent times the charge has carried penalties of social ostracism, loss of job and civil disabilities—all within the context of an ostensibly secular community. Within the churches, and ignoring fanatical sects whose faith is synonymous with intolerance, at the present time heresy is still considered a ground for dismissing clergymen and theologians from their positions.

To those who reject religion or the church, this fact is only one more sign of its ingrained malevolence. To the loyal churchman, however, it is a necessary expedient, and the only applicable question has to do with the issues on which the charge hinges. Shall a pastor be permitted to follow his own conscience if it bids him to proclaim what his church considers false? After all, certain assumptions and assurances were made when he entered his profession, and there must be some sort of control over the contract that this implies. There must be circumstances in which even a Quaker meeting might disown and exclude an unruly Friend who made a habit of singing "Onward, Christian Sol-

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diers" during the hour of silent worship—or who scoffed too vigorously at the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light.

Clearly, then, heresy and orthodoxy are relative terms, to be understood in relation not merely to some free-floating abstraction of truth but to the doctrines and dispositions of an institution. Institutions by their nature are resistant to change, and this is both a vice and a virtue. For without an element of inertia there would be no stability. Conservatism and a certain outdatedness are the price paid for continuity, reliability and order. The problem is not how to dispense with order and thereby live from moment to moment by an exact truth somehow revealed through personal oracles, but how to keep order from becoming stifling —how to make room for change within the institution itself.

Every institution has this problem, even medical associations and scientific academies, not to mention political parties. Each has a certain stake in a body of accepted ideas or practices, and its officials are likely to greet with derision any man or idea that departs from it in a significant way. Lister, Freud, Reich, Korzybski, Velikovsky are cases in point—some of them not settled even now. One might rattle off a similar list in the field of religion: Strauss, Feuerbach, Emerson, Renan, Wyneken, Tolstoi, Schweitzer—but the analogy is faulty, and for good reason, because the church is not simply a center of inquiry into a given area of objectively verifiable knowledge. Startling though they may be, the theories of Reich and Velikovsky will eventually either be incorporated into the "house of intellect" or left outside, once their data receive an impartial hearing. Freudians and Skinnerites may despise one another and belong to different professional associations; but there is room for both in the larger community of thought.

The moment we say "church" instead of merely "religion" or "community of religious thought," we must admit all its ramifications. Quite aside from its definition as the Body of Christ or a fellowship of believers, we have to do with a nationwide and even international administrative structure, training centers for ministers and missionaries, local congregations and church buildings, publications and "religious articles," a whole repertory of music and worship practices, curricula and teachers for children

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of every age, and all the various paraphernalia that bind the whole together and enable it to function. If some brilliant young archeologist tomorrow discovered convincing proof that Jesus was not crucified but beheaded, and if this discovery was accepted by the consensus of archeologists, it would probably still take a very long time before crosses were removed from local churches or the word "crucified" removed from the creeds. It would be at least several generations before the cross disappeared from common piety. If it ever did. For the greater likelihood is that the custodians of doctrine would find a way to retain the cross as a symbol. A great deal has already been written about the cross in a metaphorical sense—how the upright signifies the relation to God and the crossbar the relation to mankind—which is entirely fortuitous to those who constructed this instrument of execution.

The example is suppositious, but it is not too wide of the mark. Such discoveries as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Gospel of Thomas, *et cetera,* have not altered the canons of Scripture and are not likely to, although they may alter scholarly interpretation and even new translations of the Bible. For the church apparently is heavily committed to the canon as fixed by theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries and, given its institutional inertia, any suggestion that the question be reopened could only be viewed with dismay.

There is a strong and honest impulse within the church today to be modern and relevant. For some this may mean nothing more than uttering ancient ideas in colloquial jargon. But for others it goes much deeper. The tension between this impulse and the inertia of many centuries is at the heart of the present-day crisis of the church's integrity. For the church has, throughout its existence, predicated its claim to spiritual leadership on conceptions of orthodoxy that no longer correspond to the realities that men live by. It has, for example, become irrelevant to assert that Mary was a virgin. The average intelligent man is skeptical of such an assertion. But more important, he is not interested in it. It doesn't count. Even if it could be proved with affidavits and photographs, it would be nothing more than a curiosity, for as a religious symbol it drew its power from a con-

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text altogether different from his own. A notion so alien and implausible can only be regarded as a superstition, and any refusal to recognize it as a superstition only confirms the notion that the church is more interested in its ties to the distant past than to the needs of the present or of the eternal.

The theologian today is in an unenviable position. He speaks from a context loaded with the weight of church history—not only of dogma but of everything that has ever been done in the name of orthodoxy. His status and right to be heard "as a Christian" depend in greater or lesser degree on a tacit acceptance of the Bible, the creeds, the Fathers of the early church, the Reformers and so forth, except to the extent that he states his reservations. The Lutheran theologian is not in a position to entertain the hypothesis that Luther was a fraud. Even in the freest of the Free Churches, which do not require allegiance to the Nicene Creed, there is nevertheless a theological atmosphere that makes it safer to affirm the contents of the creed than to dispute them. It is vaguely heretical even to point out that the formulations of faith embodied in this and other creeds adopted by the church councils were both irrelevant and divisive, and that they testify to a fundamental mistake in understanding the nature of religious truth. We forget, too, the existential betrayal of Jesus' teachings that solemnized these decisions. It is not a matter only of Tetzel and the abuses of the sixteenth century—the fact is that such doctrines as the Trinity, the Resurrection, the Incarnation, were adopted in a vicious spirit. Far from loving one another or forgiving one another, bishops and presbyters defamed each other, promoting enmity, resorting to strong-arm methods, rioting and torture for the sake of these arid abstractions.

I am not here arguing against these doctrines. I am, however, pointing out that they did not grow naturally from the life and message of Jesus, and persuade his followers of their truth, nor did they become simply opinions held by a majority of the wise. Whether true or untrue, they became official and were imposed by force. Their status is thus suspect, for one must ask what sort of people would behave in this way and still call themselves followers of Jesus. Either they are right to impose the doctrine of the Trinity by force, and Jesus is wrong to teach love and kind-

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ness; or, if Jesus is right, their use of force is wrong and their reasons for wanting to use it are beside the point.

Yet the church as an institution is bound together by doctrine —moreover, a doctrine inaugurated by the sword. And theology, to the extent that it serves the church, is designed primarily to explain rather than to challenge doctrine. Even the theologian who proclaims so radical a notion as "the death of God" retains, through his affiliation with seminary and church, a tacit endorsement of the general structure of dogma. And this institutional relationship, in the absence of a detailed disclaimer on his part, sets a limit upon his freedom of inquiry. On its face, it is an anomaly to be a "theologian" if God is dead in any final sense, and the anomaly will be resolved by discovering a "God beyond God" with the aid of other doctrines from the early centuries. Likewise, it is daring but ecclesiastically acceptable to attempt to transplant doctrines from the soil of Greek philosophy to that of Whitehead or Heidegger. The risk assumed in these enterprises, however, is philosophical rather than theological. To speak, in such a context, of a "radical reformation," "renewal" and the like is merely to speak of new ways of operating an old system of ideas and practices. Rudolf Bultmann's demythologizing enterprise, for all its scholarly boldness, accomplishes not much more than to affirm the doctrine of the Resurrection while acknowledging that, so far as we can determine, Jesus' corpse was not actually resuscitated—hence Easter can be freed of superstition and remain one of the church's three most holy days. When the dust of controversy has settled, it will be seen that what seemed radical was merely novel; the roots of orthodoxy not only remain but have been given new life, accommodated to soil that had seemed infertile.

Theology is not unconcerned with truth, and to denounce it as false because of its institutional bias is excessive. Indeed, at the center of its concerns the truth can scarcely be discerned except by means of theology itself, or by intuitive means, by faith, which can be scrutinized but not quantitatively assayed. Nevertheless, it tends to have the character of an ideology, in Karl Mannheim's understanding of that term—it is so structured as to prejudice truth in favor of the institution that is held to

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be instrumental to the furtherance of truth. And there is no way out. There is a complete impasse so long as theology remains committed to the institution; it cannot entertain the risk of staking out positions in advance of the church and expect the church to heed it. And even to state the matter in these terms is merely to reaffirm the symbiosis.

Yet among the possibilities that exist for man in the modern world are these—that religion is of vital importance, that something derivable from Christianity provides a key to life's meaning, and that the church is ill-suited to emphasize what is most needed. It may be that theology is needed and the church is not. It may be that the church is in need of reformation and renewal, which it cannot get from its own theologians because of their fated ideological role. It may even be the case that the church must begin to look elsewhere if it is to cut through the maze of dogma and find the truth—not some abstract truth but the kernel of salvation, the truth proclaimed by Jesus.

I cannot be indifferent to the church or to its theologians. Yet beyond the institution and its adherents, there are God and man and the perennial dialogue between them, a crucial part of which is found in the New Testament and specifically in the figure and image of Jesus. No institution can patent or sequester that dialogue; no creed can define or circumscribe it. Man may or may not need the church, and God may or may not use it; but if God is real and if his covenant with man means anything, the church is optional for him; he is not its captive or its property, and its formulas are only as efficacious as he wills.

There exists, in contemporary church thought, a concept of a "theology of the laity," which has two emphases: a kind of simplification of standard academic theology in terms understandable to the layman; and, through this simplified medium, indoctrination of the layman regarding his role in the church. The aim is a modest and cautious one, to raise the woefully inadequate level of the layman's understanding of what the church is about in the twentieth century, to make theology intelligible to him, hence to broaden the base of support for policies undertaken by the church's leadership, even to give him a share of responsibility for those policies.

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John A. T. Robinson, the Anglican Bishop of Woolwich, has vigorously criticized this concept for not going far enough. Advocating "a genuinely lay theology," he sees this as arising from lay institutes, evangelical academies, ecumenical centers. Contrasting it with the theologies of earlier times, which were pastoral (or as he says "episcopal"), monastic (or mystical-ascetic), or scholastic (erudition for its own sake), he designates "lay theology" as that which "is impelled by the needs of the *laos,* or whole people of God, to *be* the Church *in* the world." This change of theological orientation is to accompany a serious reform of the organizational structure of the church itself. Instead of a "cultic organism" as in the Middle Ages or a "confessional assembly" as in the Reformation and after, he envisions with Gibson Winter "*the prophetic fellowship* as the only relevant form of 'the servant Church in a secularized world.'" Academic theology, says Robinson in his book, *The New Reformation?,* has been a theology too shut off from the world, too much geared to the professional ministry, too little focused on the present. Lay theology would emphasize: twentieth-century church history; a theology of missions stressing engagement with twentieth-century secular thought and society; contemporary systematic theology such as Tillich's; and contextual ethics. It would also revive natural theology as contrasted with dogmatic theology, and give it a central role along with the other kinds, although this is admittedly risky.

The note that Robinson wishes to strike is not only that theology should have a *lay* but also, and perhaps more important, a *secular* thrust, engaging the church more emphatically with the world in every sense. For the church, if it is to survive and justify its existence, must minister to the world and in the world. Yet it remains the church—and the church must not be reduced to evangelical academies and lay centers, which are to remain for some time only outposts of the established institutional structure. Or, in some sense, perhaps the new lay theology is to be regarded as not so much a venture as a controlled experiment, a kind of hothouse radicalism:

> [It] would in fact be a disastrous impoverishment if such lay theology were forced to come to fruition in isolation from the traditional centers

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of theological engagement, the councils of the Church, the religious, i.e. monastic communities, the universities and the seminaries. For unless it is planted in these and can draw upon their resources, it will be stunted for lack of depth of earth. Nevertheless, if these bodies are to take it into their systems they must expect it to disturb many of their presuppositions.

Robinson may not have intended it so, but his plea for a new reformation turns out to be an appeal to the church to lift itself by its own bootstraps, to achieve a more intelligent and streamlined orthodoxy through better use of its extant resources. Nothing basic is risked: churchmen will become better Christians by using better methods; they will be kept in the church by undertaking to serve those outside it; and the church will prosper because the walls come down to give it access to the world. As an ecclesiastic, the Bishop-theologian may be pardoned for doing so, but his overriding concern is a strategy for the survival of the church. He takes it for granted that the church can and must lead the way. Its servanthood is not only self-conscious but too patently "official."

From such a viewpoint there is, of course, every reason to turn to Martin Buber, to Nietzsche, to Freud and perhaps even to Karl Marx for instruction in being a "good Christian," for developing skills in coming to grips with the modern world. One may even put the creeds in a drawer somewhere, turning one's attention to Camus and Sartre, if this will aid the church and give one a sense of contemporaneity—but the result will be little more than "implications for the Gospel" or "challenges to relevance." One will sound different, one will sing the tune to a new beat and even improvise on it, but underneath the atonality it is still "Onward, Christian Soldiers." One will make Christianity secular, existential, humanistic, dialectical, even atheistic, but it will still be somehow doctrinally untransformed and, above all, churchly. The new reformation, such as it is, enunciates a new pluralism for the church's ideology and technique, expanding the range of theology and institutional structure while at the same time reaffirming an essential unity of churchmen predicated on embarrassing but intact dogmas. Thus we are to assume that in some sense Billy Graham, Pope Paul VI and Norman

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Vincent Peale are bound together in Christ's truth, along with Chiang Kai-shek and Dorothy Day, while the likes of Martin Buber and Bertrand Russell are benighted outsiders or at best "honorary Christians."

"Yes," the liberal Christian will admit, "we have our differences and our black sheep, and we are humble and contrite about it." But that is not the point. The point is the ability to say "we." And in this consists the church's true dilemma—the dilemma posed by the very categories of orthodox and heretical, and at a deeper level by those of truth and reconciliation. There is a very great presumption in thinking that the institutional church has anything to do with either the *koinonia* or the *ekklēsia* of the New Testament, or that any of these is necessarily the "mystical body of Christ" or anything like it. Too much of the evidence is contrary. And what are we to say if Martin Buber's Ihud more clearly resembles the spirit of *koinonia* than does Last Baptist Church of Burnt Cross, Mississippi? Shall "we" mumble about the mysteries of God and not question the patent blasphemy of a doctrine of the church that makes such a misalignment inevitable?

The answer, in part, consists in a needed secularization of the church itself—more precisely its *desacralization*. The church is a social institution, nothing more. It is not even Christian except in a nominal sense; it is no more Christian than the Democratic Party is democratic, although these hold respectively Christianity and democracy as desiderata. And what of Christianity as a desideratum? In fact, is it so—or may it not be only one of several ways of seeking to be truly human? And how far can the institution promote the goal, if in fact it can do so at all?

> What stirs me incessantly [wrote Bonhoeffer in 1944] is the question of what Christianity really is or even who Christ really is. The time when one could tell men everything in words, whether theological or pious, is over; likewise the time of inwardness and conscience, and that means precisely the time of religion altogether. We are facing a completely religionless time; men simply cannot now be religious any more. Even those who honestly call themselves "religious" don't practice it in any way; hence presumably they mean something quite different by "religion." Our whole 1900-year Christian preaching and theology was erected upon the "religious *a priori*" of men. "Christianity" has always

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been a form (perhaps the true form) of "religion." But if now, one fine day, it becomes clear that this *"a priori"* doesn't exist at all but was a historically conditioned and transitory form of human expression, and if man actually becomes radically religionless . . . what does that mean for Christianity?

What *does* this mean for Christianity as a religion? To Bonhoeffer it meant its death and rebirth into a new, nonreligious form—and subsequent theologians of the past two decades have seen this to mean commitment without cult, a new emphasis on witness and involvement, maintaining a private discipline of prayer and a public life of selfless service to one's fellowmen. This is what Bonhoeffer increasingly saw Christianity to be; and he came to see Christ as "the man for others" in the midst of life, a prototype for anyone who would be a Christian in a world that has achieved such maturity that it can dispense with the God who created it.

Bonhoeffer might have said with autobiographical veracity simply that *he* had become unable to communicate his faith to others in words, or to regard it as valid when turned inward. One is tempted to imagine an incident one day in the prison when a fellow inmate says to him, "Why the hell don't you shut up! You don't know anything about God and you're not helping any of us with your fancy talk. If you want to be a Christian, just *act* like one and never mind the gibberish." His life and career had been shaped by both academic theology and the piety of the Prussian aristocrat, and the tension between these and the hard realities of a tough, profane world comprise the engine of his thought in his last letters from prison. He had, until his imprisonment, been a leading participant in the church's encounter with the realities of the modern world, yet it is astonishing to what little extent even such a man was affected by this encounter. Even though he had spent time in Barcelona, New York and London, the boundaries of his mind remained remarkably provincial, for his participation remained predominantly that of a German academic visitor to academic or churchly enclaves—a little like the American tourist who stays at American hotels all over the world. He is highly conversant with Luther and knows his Greek New Testament; he prefers Adalbert Stifter to

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Rilke; he is inordinately fond of the good old Pietist hymns of Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676). Except for Dostoevski, Goethe, Kant and Nicolai Hartmann, his secular reading is on a decidedly bourgeois plane—Gotthelf, Stifter, Immermann, Fontane, Keller, Jean Paul, writers scarcely known to the non-German reader and figuring as minor authors even within the German literary world. It is not entirely facetious to say that most of his life was spent with comfortable suburbanites—even under the shadow of Hitler, in the pastors' training center at Finkenwalde and in his activities in the patrician resistance movement, which attempted to kill the dictator.

Bonhoeffer had been in prison for a full year before the radical change in his thinking began, and clearly he himself was alarmed, feeling himself cut off from his friends. The words quoted above represent his first real confrontation of the questions that were to preoccupy him until his death a year later,* and they are preceded by these:

My theological thinking with its consequences would surprise you or perhaps even make you at least uneasy, and in this I really miss you now, for I wouldn't know who else I could even tell that it means a clarification for me.

It was a fearful step, and Bonhoeffer was only too conscious of it, for as he went on to say, "Our whole 'Christianity' up till now is deprived of its foundation." Yet he felt that something of paramount value was to be salvaged from the wreckage, and he tried by fits and starts to make a stab at the task of developing a "nonreligious" Christianity. He was trying to make a new start, jettisoning past conceptions yet unable really to break loose from them—as when he asserts that "for the Christian" it is necessary to have an absolute basis of hope; "Christ, our hope" is the power of "our" life, while others can rely on illusion. This parochialism persists, and it is convenient for those churchmen who wish to press Bonhoeffer's more radical insights into the service of the church, blending them with his conventionality rather than following the new direction wherever it might

* Bonhoeffer was imprisoned in April 1943. The letter quoted was written in April 1944, and his radical thought is fragmentally embodied in about a dozen letters written during the next four months. There is an eight-month gap from August until his death in April 1945.

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lead. Significantly, Robinson's recourse is almost entirely to the Bonhoeffer of April 1944 and after—and what is disappointing is his unwillingness to follow forward from that point. But even more disappointing is the attempt of many others to exploit *this* Bonhoeffer in a rhetorical way to give ornamentation to the Bonhoeffer of the Finkenwalde period, thus smothering the only really new insights with an outworn idol of the man himself, and missing the point that such phrases as "for the Christian" are hangovers from the past, not guideposts for the future. Many of Bonhoeffer's points are intriguing but inconclusive: "On 'egoism' of the Christian ('selfless self-love') etc. next. . . . Too much altruism is oppressive and pretentious! 'Egoism' can be selfless, unpretentious!"* But the next four letters are devoid of theological interest, the fifth goes off on a new tangent only obliquely related to the question of egoism and the question is swallowed up in banal analogy and theological woolgathering—and the six letters in all account for two whole weeks out of the four-month period of creativity.

To the extent that his amorphous and elusive structure of thought can be summarized, it consists of little more than questions and catchwords. The world has achieved a maturity in which it no longer needs God to explain anything. Yet the world "must be understood better than it understands itself," and the Bible, myths and all, can provide this understanding—but "religion" must not be a precondition of the faith by which the Bible's truth is made operative. In other words the Gospel and Christ must themselves be secularized and thus made accessible to contemporary, religionless man. Man's redemption is not achieved by his being saved from the world after death, but rather he is "resurrected" in the midst of this-worldly life, and the transformation that this means involves no repudiation of selfhood. That which is "wholly other" and which we have thought of as "the beyond" or "the world to come" is not far away but very near, yet not merely in the sense of a private reas-

* Reginald Fuller translates the last two sentences thus: "Too much altruism is a bore, and makes too many claims. There is a kind of egoism which can be more selfless, and make less claims upon us." See Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers From Prison* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 169. The meaning is clear enough in the original but it has been "helped" in a different direction by the translator's interpretation.

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surance. The God who is thus "with us" is the same God who forsook Jesus on the cross, and he likewise forsakes us (remember, this is written by a man who is to be executed). Part of the world's maturity consists in its abandoning the idea of a powerful God, the God who controls events and rewards the religious with his favors. The real God is somehow present amidst suffering, available to faith, as shown in Jesus; and one does not achieve this faith by trying to live a holy life. One must abandon the attempt to make oneself a saint or a churchman or a righteous man, and just take life in stride, responding rather than manipulating. Do what is right, supported only by God's commandment and your faith, for only in the deed is there freedom.

The foregoing omits, I think, nothing of importance in Bonhoeffer's last letters. In August he drafted an outline for a new book, which he never wrote, and I summarize it here:

1. A Stocktaking of Christianity
   a) Man has largely won control over nature but is threatened by the dangers of organization. He needs spiritual vitality to cope with the problem of human nature.
   b) Religion has decayed and "God" is superfluous.
   c) The Protestant Church is on the defensive, unwilling to risk itself for humanity. The vocabulary of tradition is a dead weight, hard to understand. Personal faith is in decline.
   d) Popular morality, for example, sexual morality.

2. What is actually Christian faith?
   a) Worldliness and God.
   b) Who is God? Not general God-belief in God's omnipotence, *et cetera.* Jesus' "being-there-for-others" is the experience of transcendence, the freedom-from-self from which omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence derive. Faith is participation in this being of Jesus. (Incarnation, cross, resurrection.) "Our relationship to God is no 'religious' one to an imaginably highest, mightiest, best being," but a new life in "existence for others" in collaboration with the being of Jesus. Not the unending, unreachable problem, but whatever is near at any moment. Man living on the basis of transcendence.
   c) Interpretation of biblical concepts from here on. (Creation, fall, reconciliation, repentance, faith, *vita nuova,* last things.)
   d) Cultus and "religion."

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e) What do we really believe, that is, so that we stake our life on it? What *must* I believe? is a false question, an outdated controversial question arising from interconfessional disputes. The faith of Christianity and the Bible does not stand or fall with such disputes as those between Catholics and Protestants or Lutherans and Calvinists. To say it's the church's, not mine, is a priestly subterfuge that evades the honest question of what our real personal belief is.

3. Conclusions from the above

The church is only the church when it exists for others. In order to make a beginning it must give all property to those in dire need. The pastors should live exclusively on the free-will offerings of the congregations. (These points, be it noted, are made in a country where the church is supported through public taxation.) It must tell men of every occupation what life with Christ is, what it means to "exist for others." Especially will *our* church have to oppose the vices of *hubris,* worship of power, envy and humbug as the roots of all evil. It must speak of moderation, genuineness, trust, faithfulness, constancy, patience, propriety, humility, modesty and contentedness. It will not do to underestimate the significance of human "example"; not through concepts but through "example" its word gets emphasis and strength. Further, the revision of the creeds, of Christian apologetics, of ministerial training and leadership.

The direction of Bonhoeffer's last thoughts is toward a new kind of down-to-earth, here-and-now Christian humanism. The implications are all there in truncated form, illustrated in such key phrases as "mature world" and "existence for others," but right down to the end they are clogged by the stifling vocabulary of tradition, a vocabulary to which Bonhoeffer was committed by his training and milieu. Moreover, like so much of academic theology, there is an almost exclusive dealing in abstractions to the neglect of empirical considerations, specific and concrete examples. There is little if any sense of growth, flux, development or dynamic, and consequently too little of the "how" of things to make their "why" relevant. Bonhoeffer spent too much of his life talking to fellow theologians and fellow churchmen; hence it was difficult for him to see beyond a given set of vocabularies and options offered by the various churchly traditions, and virtually all

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of his contributions consist of modifications of tradition. His doctoral dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio,* written seventeen years before the crucial prison letters, is supposed to be a dialogue between sociological and theological views of the church, but in reality it is a monologue in which sociological *ideas* are merely fitted into a theological structure—ideas, moreover, derived from the most theoretical and abstract of the sociologists. Bonhoeffer was ill-suited to converse with a Weber, a Mannheim, a Tawney or a Mills. Yet just such a dialogue on *their* terms would have been the intellectual equivalent of his risk-taking activities in the plot against Hitler. There was a gulf between such action and his theology—not necessarily an incompatibility, but an absence of bridgework.

What do we really believe—honestly, personally, without reference to the church or the Bible or the traditional interpretations? Has it anything to do with Christ in the sense of "existence for others"? Can we begin without "Christian" presuppositions, without the "leap of faith," and discover an inherent validity in the Gospel? If we say, *by definition,* that Christ makes men good, can we then say, "John is good; therefore Christ is in him or with him," without asking whether John is a Christian or has ever heard of Christianity? Had he continued to move in the direction of secularization, Bonhoeffer would have had to raise fundamental questions about the church: assuming that "the church" is *by definition* "the communion of saints" or even the primary vehicle of Christianity, what reason is there for asserting that an institution's claim to this status is valid? Does it have any real, applicable meaning? What was the Confessing Church's justification for breaking away from the Nazi-dominated "German Christians"? And may not a Kierkegaard, for example, be "the church" and repudiate the Danish State Church as a mere masquerade?

The point in history at which the world became so mature that it no longer needed the "God hypothesis," or at which God "died," is hard to locate with any precision. The full realization of the dawning of a secular, post-Christian era is very recent. Within this century, religion collapsed mightily in Russia, and

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has ebbed more gradually throughout the rest of Europe. Western-sponsored missions have been deflated throughout the world, and the places where people may be counted on to go to church are areas like the American South, Spain and South Africa.

After the death of Bach, there were few composers who wrote sacred music and still fewer of any status who devoted much of their time to it. Except for Gerard Manley Hopkins and perhaps Thomas Merton, very little Christian religious poetry of serious literary quality has been written since before the French Revolution. It is not a matter of a decline from some golden era of the Middle Ages or the Reformation; it is rather the cultural parallel or expression of the process in which, as Bonhoeffer puts it, God has been edged off the map. There is no Dante for this era, no Grünewald or Bosch—and the market is thinning out for the ecclesiastical hack artists, poets and composers who have accommodated the debased taste of the bourgeois church since Kierkegaard's time.

The conventional view held by those theologians who are interested enough to care is, roughly, that the stream of religious expression has simply been cut off except for a few "Christian" writers who belong to the church, and for the rest something relevant to Christian faith may emerge from dialogue between the church and the wholly secularized artist. The theologian of culture will probe for dimensions of meaning and value in Picasso's "Guernica" or Genet's *The Blacks* and perhaps try to relate these to points of theological doctrine—or look for Christian answers or equivalents to Camus and Sartre.

The odd man out is the writer or thinker who is neither a certified Christian nor a certified atheist, but who has dared to advance his own personal religious faith, even his own personal vision of God or Jesus without benefit of church or clergy. Such persons are not playing the game. For them, religion may or may not be dead, but instead of disappearing it has taken a new turn. If it has any "ideological" function, it is not that of the church, and sometimes tacitly or obliquely it may be a protest against the church. They represent a step beyond the "lay theology" of Bishop Robinson, and a serious expression of real belief, often reshaping and extending the images and myths of the Bible.

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Jewish Humor and American Life

EARL ROVIT

QUITE CLEARLY, THE ONLY OBSERVER who would be qualified to comment on the complicated relationship of Jewish humor to contemporary American life would be an American Jew with a superb sense of humor, a delicate comprehension of the American character in its variegated historical metamorphoses, and a profound intuition of those precipices of meaning where humor and faith shade off into the macabre, the pathological, the surreal and the banal. Such a man would also have to possess in abundance that left-handed gift of the gods that is called in Yiddish, *chutzpah*—a misfortune of temperament for which the Greek term, *hubris,* is, at best, a somewhat weak and mollycoddled approximation. I have waited in vain for such an observer to appear. Perhaps he became garroted on the Nietzchean tightrope that is supposed to span the primordial abyss. Or, more likely, he married the daughter of a wealthy businessman and put his childish toys away. At any rate, I can wait no longer for him. Pride forces me to offer myself in his place as a voluntary sacrifice of scholarly immolation. And if certain of my observations are in some ways faulty or excessively partial, I console myself with the wise aphorism of a learned Detroit rabbi: "A Cadillac has four wheels and it stumbles."

Nor will it be a digression to confess at the outset that my understanding of American-Jewish life has been constantly confused by a recurrent illusion that I keep shedding like a serpent's skin, only to regrow in a dark thoughtless time. As a young boy, cradled like a jellied egg in the security of my family, I knew that whatever unpleasantness might lurk in the external Gentile world, all Jews, at least, were good, intelligent and hu-

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morous. My poor egg was cracked years and years ago, and I learned that like everyone else, Jews were all kinds of things—not necessarily good, intelligent and humorous merely because they were born as Jews. And yet an early illusion refuses to die easily; it submerges itself to thrash around in the soup of one's emotions like a fish that is all energetic tail. It stirs the current on which our thoughts will flow and it provides the turbulence by which we measure our dissatisfactions with life and ourselves.

The good, the intelligent and the humorous; a significant triad, no? Not, you will notice, the good, the true and the beautiful, which is the average American's traditional birthright as a foundling of the Romantic Revolution. There is a subtle but far-reaching difference here between these triads. Keats's exhortation is the expression of a profoundly Gentile faith—Christian and Greek, Catholic and Protestant, certainly sublime, but patently unacceptable to Job or Spinoza, to Freud or Kafka. The good, the intelligent and the humorous—this is something else, something more acerb, more rational, more profane, less democratic, but, I think, more grounded in what is humanly possible. What I think of as the Jewish triad swings away from an abstract transcendental system of values to those concrete qualities of personality that can be learned or painfully acquired. It shifts its locus from the divine realms of spirit to character, from implacable standards to human modes of behavior, from the resonances of spontaneous revelation where all men are potential saints to earthbound strategies of life survival. I cannot find truth in the twentieth century, but I can try to cultivate my intelligence in order to discern how little I know. I cannot fashion a beautiful life in a world that my reason insists is ugly, but I can learn to laugh. I can even learn that, under special circumstances, laughter may be a form of prayer, certainly no less efficacious than the humorless variety, and probably emanating from the same source. And, indeed, I doubt that my triad is peculiar to me. Whether it is a larger European inheritance (one thinks of Kierkegaard, of Dostoevski) or a quasi-Jewish importation to American life, I believe that I am nowhere more a child of my time than in my adherence to this triangular faith.

Alas, all Jews are not, like myself, good, intelligent and hu-

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morous, but in recent years there has been increasing comment on an emergent quality in American life that is purported to be a product of Jewishness—that is, that intangible pungency of atmosphere that is rather nebulously referred to as "Jewish humor." What a quixotic label that is! It pretends to describe in sober sociological tones, but it points nowhere and everywhere. Is there such a thing as The American Jew anyway? Some characterological amalgam of Williamsburg Hasidic and Shaker Heights Unitarian, Orthodox and atheist, passionate secularist of innumerable civic meetings and the assimilatedly indifferent? What monstrous portmanteau word could be fixed on such a creature? Only the Messiah could take such a form. And, despair added to despair, what is humor? (What is humor? Humor is when you laugh. And when do you laugh? You laugh when you don't cry. And what is Jewish humor? You laugh while you cry a little.) No, this is good enough for Sholem Aleichem or *The Fiddler on the Roof* perhaps, but too disingenuous for a people that must constantly remember six million of its slaughtered dead.

Jewish humor disembarked in America at Ellis Island with the immigrational waves of East European Jewry between 1880 and 1915. In its Ur-form it was a product of shtetl-life, intransigently Yiddish, severely defined by the accumulated defense mechanisms of survival in a tightly interlocked communal system where the family was not only the central unit, but the unit that was elastically expandable to encompass the entire community. "The Children of Israel" was more than a biblical epithet. It was a phrase of kinship (Israel's children) and a severe sociological definition. Outside the large family was an alien life—a shark-infested multi-Protestant and Catholic water inherently or potentially hostile to Jewish life. Alien food, alien women, alien customs, alien ideals. Outside the movable shtetl nothing was exactly kosher. One's neighbors, one's government, the very culture within which one breathed—these operated by motives that were different and hence dangerous. After all, the Jewish immigrants had been conditioned for centuries by pogrom and persecution to some form of ghetto life. Their relationship to the outside world had been constrained to a narrowly restricted buying-

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and-selling connection with their neighbors, and everyone knows that a customer is always a secret enemy who must be outwitted by cunning, flattery and veiled intimidation—that is, by all the talents of the mind when the mind is unaccompanied by force. The initial Jewish adaptation to the American scene was a naïve attempt to re-create the old conditions of city life in this baffling New World. And Jewish humor remained defensive and private, a reserve for one's own bitter amusement in the homely curses muttered under the breath in Yiddish that the customer or employer couldn't possibly understand. "Of course, Mrs. Morgan—(You should bury your head in the earth like an onion.)—But naturally, you're absolutely right—(You should only swell up like a mountain.)—"

But America is a vast country and even the newly landed immigrants found themselves possessed of the volatile mobility of the Russian boyars. The closed shtetl-system was doomed from the beginning by the awesome capacity of American life to absorb all of its citizens—at least, its white citizens—and to offer them undreamed-of prosperity. The religious training in Talmud Torah could not compete with a compulsory system of free mass education and open libraries. The synagogues and benevolent societies were unable to cope with a phenomenally rising standard of living and an equally phenomenal rise in religious indifference. The years preceding and immediately following World War One were years of great intellectual ferment. The slogans of emancipation were thick in the air and economic prosperity promised to translate the airy slogans into hard reality. Nor is it an insignificant fact that the most articulate American Jews of the first part of the twentieth century—the men who came to control the ideological policies of the major Yiddish newspapers and the burgeoning trade unions—tended to be Socialists and/or Zionists. Neither position gave more than short shrift to the orthodoxies of communal ritual life. Both positions labored for the establishment of a Promised Land and both insisted on political-empirical means in arriving at their goals. The age-old pieties of family worship had little place in the fiery dreams that exerted a tremendous weight of influence on the entire American Jewish community.

Hence, after World War One and the Russian Revolution,

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the typical American Jew was unwittingly caught up in a foredoomed struggle between his traditional communal insularity and the alluring fluidity of the outside world. Almost in spite of himself (and frequently burdened by a bad conscience), he became committed to seeking a better material life for himself and his children, doubtless without fully realizing that the price he would pay would be the virtual loss of his traditions and his religious identity. It is, after all, an old American story. While his Irish-American neighbors found a congenial strategy of upward movement in consolidating the political power of the urban communities in which they lived, the Jew resorted to his experience in merchandising (a term that can extend from door-to-door peddling to the amassing of great fortunes in retailing and wholesaling), as well as to the individual upward thrust of education. No, all Jews are not intelligent, but American Jews had both a heritage of adherence to the charisma of education and a fantastic internal pressure to take advantage of the free public school system that was miraculously open to them. If they were, as they had been called, "The People of the Book," they would use books to secure a good life for themselves. One by one the learned professions grudgingly opened their restricted quotas to the avalanche of pale-faced, worn-out at thirty, emancipated Jews who had qualified to become dentists, doctors, lawyers, university professors. "My son, the doctor," is not just a Jewish joke; it is close to being a Jewish disease, contagious like the measles, but not so easily quarantinable.

But there exists in all groups of people an urge not only to improve their material and individual conditions, but also to impress their indigenous stamp on the larger life that surrounds them. And this is especially true when that stamp of group identity is at the point of becoming a nostalgic reminiscence. At least this has usually been so in America. Politics was by and large a closed arena to the Jew—except in New York City and in such astonishing aridities as Arizona where a man of Jewish ancestry can be no more curious or Jewish than the ubiquitous cactus. The bastions of finance were securely closed to the Jew. From the professions of law and medicine, little direct influence could be exerted on the tempo and color of American life. But

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the entertainment industry was something else, and while there was spirited competition from the waggish Irish, the Jewish entertainer invaded vaudeville before the First World War, and by 1950 had become an almost saturated commodity in the radio, television and the movies. From the old burlesque circuits, from Potash and Perlmutter and "Cohen on the Telephone," through the great Broadway age of Jolson, Cantor, Irving Berlin, Fannie Brice and the Gershwins, through the thirties and forties of the Marx Brothers, Milton Berle, Danny Kaye, Jack Benny, *et cetera,* the American Jew came to possess a sizable leasehold on popular American comic entertainment.

The situations and characters they exploited were too richly idiosyncratic to be simply categorized, but distinct traces of the older Yiddish shtetl-sources can still be seen in some of the stock types that were seized upon and endlessly refurbished. The schlemiel, the schnorrer, infinite combinations of the two, and a type generally known in the old Catskill Borscht Belt as the *meshuggah*—the wild, irresponsible, disconnected buffoon who oscillates between the frenetic edges of obscenity and tearful sentimentality. The Jewish entertainer became master of a savage dialogue with his audience: "Go ahead, stupids, laugh! Go ahead, laugh! What you can't see is that I'm laughing my head off at *you* and you're paying me for the privilege!" Essentially, to become an entertainer, the Jew had merely to change his role as salesman a little bit. His new commodity was his own stage personality, and the old muttered curses and insults were now made audible and scarcely less direct. The customer remained the same—the great alien Protestant audience, guileless, easily gulled, of thickened wit, but always a potential danger in its resources of sluggish strength. There is inevitably a lubricant of hostility in all humor, I suppose. At least it is very difficult to imagine the sound of laughter without the surprise invitation to ridicule, but Jewish vaudeville humor has been markedly parsimonious in its compensating offerings of love. It has been profligate in assuming gestures of outrageous grotesquerie. It has delighted in playing the fool in order to make its audiences make fools of themselves. But its double-facings of absurd exposure and sly or open insult have rarely been mitigated by a passion

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to extol what is right, or a compassion to love what is incurably wrong.

The situation has not really changed very much since 1950. With the increasing sophistication of television, with the rebirth of vaudeville in the emergence of the "stand-up comedians" like Mort Sahl, Shelly Berman or Lennie Bruce, with the massive circulation of quasi-humorous magazines like *Playboy* and *Mad,* the lines of influence have become slightly more complicated without substantially changing. The national advertising agencies and public relations firms have become an integral part of the entertainment industry, accepting without protest the well-worn comic types and situations. One can in America be exhorted to buy a beer, give up smoking, vote for a Senator, drive safely, be mildly amused by a television clown, or be shocked by the verbal license of a nightclub comedian without much of an alteration in the accents and nuances of what was once the private property of a Yiddish wedding jester.

It is impossible to explain how this came about—why, that is, Yiddish humor (defensive-aggressive, earthy Yiddish humor) should have proved so successful in Protestant America. Doubtless there are many factors ranging from the economic ownership of the production and distribution of entertainment media to the peculiar need that Jews may have in being patrons of the entertainment arts. Among possible explanations might be suggested the very fact that America *is* a Protestant country. There is, of course, a vigorous theoretical ideal of *protest* running deep in the fabric of American history; and humor, by its very nature, is of the party of the opposition. It is also true that the Yiddish schlemiel-figure and the schnorrer have their native American counterparts in such eighteenth- and nineteenth-century folk creations as Brother Jonathan and Poor Richard, on the one hand, and The Confidence Man, on the other. Our psychoanalytical friends may also want to note that Yiddish humor, incontrovertibly involved with the physical—with the body and bodily functions—may at one time have provided a minor release of tensions for a society that had been trained either to ignore the body entirely or to improve it by an energetic course in hygiene. (The possible sadomasochistic elements, the latent homo-

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sexuality, and the rechanneling of sociological guilt are matters that I gladly leave to those scholars whose needs in these directions are more urgent than my own.)

But more than this, however, I wonder whether the defensive-aggressive dynamism of Jewish humor may not have fulfilled a more subtle function for a population that was historically lacking in the rigid structures of society and that, metaphysically, posited the lonely soul floating in isolation before the stark unregarding eye of God. Jewish humor automatically assumed a society—a human contact point between speaker and listener, between entertainer and spectator. Even an insult is a passable bridge between man and man. It is probably true that the central unit of the Jewish community, the family, has badly crumbled both sociologically and psychologically, but it is invoked nostalgically at the moment of the pratfall, in the riotous hysteria of the boffo punch line. At its best, humor is one of the ways in which human beings can attain a meager sense of their own brotherhood; and, at its best, the ironic insult of Jewish humor includes slightly more of humanity than it rejects.

But even this, I fear, is too optimistic a note to describe the contemporary condition. It certainly seems true that Yiddish humor has become a significant ingredient in American life, a natural resource for thousands who are unaware of the exotic sources of the commodity they so naturally embrace. Its bittersweet sentimentality and its delight in grotesque irony have been able to blend easily with the older tradition of American "frontier humor" (the tall tale, the inverted criticism) as well as with the "outsider's" humor that is found in Irish, Italian and Negro comic strategies. (Jackie Gleason, Jimmy Durante and Sammy Davis, Jr., are good examples of the extent to which Yiddish humor has been both an influence and a beneficiary in the creation of American comic types.) But for all the successful Jewish clowns from Mike Sachs to Mike Nichols, there is not one that can stand comparison to the lonely comic genius of a Chaplin. For all the shrewd irreverent commentators on the State of the Nation, the nearest Jewish replica that we can find to place against the giant shape of Mark Twain would be—you should pardon the expression—Harry Golden. And although

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the last twenty years have witnessed a magnificent florescence of genuinely comic Jewish writers—Bellow, Malamud, Roth, Salinger, Heller, *et cetera*—none of their books, insofar as they have aimed at satire, has had anything of the social power of Sinclair Lewis' novels. (George F. Babbitt quickly became a universal American type; Moses E. Herzog is inevitably a foreign curiosity.)

Perhaps Jewish humor has succeeded too easily in adapting itself to American life, and in its popular success in the mass media, it may have sacrificed its own fulfillment. Humor, after all, has to be against something—a concrete injustice, a specific affectation or hypocrisy. It is a strategy of intelligence moving into action, either to protect something of its own that it judges to be good, or to attack something that it deems to be bad. I wonder whether Jewish humor may not have allowed itself to accept without struggle the consensus of bourgeois ideals in Protestant America at the expense of its own intelligence. At any rate, merchandising has joined hands again and again with humor to denigrate intelligence and provide shallow, marketable entertainment. Individual Jews have made notable contributions in the causes of unpopular dissent in the twentieth century, but Jewish humor has been suspiciously silent on the major controversial issues that foster the dialectics for defining justice in practice. Jewish humor has lagged behind, waiting until it is fashionable to decry this evil, to expose that injustice.

The old show-business mottoes, "Give them what they want!" and "Leave them laughing!," seem to me to be merely theatrical equivalents of the equally false and hypocritical, "The customer is always right." Such a principle of salesmanship breaks my precious triad, separates intelligence from humor, and shamefully degrades the good. Perhaps the Jew must become more American before he can attain that security of citizenship that will enable him to afford the "insider's" disgust with the collective condition that sometimes results in great humane humor. But perhaps as he becomes more American, he will cease to be Jewish enough to maintain a balance between the gross realities he perceives and the ideals that convict his soul.

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Science, A Wellspring of Our Discontent

WALTER ORR ROBERTS

SCIENCE HAS MANY IMAGES. And it has many spokesmen. A century and a half ago Goethe said of science, "To one man it is the highest thing, a heavenly goddess; to another it is a productive and proficient cow, who supplies him with butter." On TV a scientist may be a mad genius, or a man in a white lab coat, or an iron-willed and hard-driving researcher without time for or interest in his wife or children. On TV science is space rockets, computers and miracle coatings that make razor blades last longer, cut closer.

But I believe that in searching for a spokesman for science, I could scarcely find a wiser man to quote here than Warren Weaver, who wrote in 1960:

> Science is not technology, it is not gadgetry, it is not some mysterious cult, it is not a great mechanical monster. Science is an adventure of the human spirit. It is essentially an artistic enterprise, stimulated largely by curiosity, served largely by disciplined imagination, and based largely on faith in the reasonableness, order, and beauty of the universe of which man is part.

In other words, science, like music or fine art, is a wellspring of the divine discontent that stirs man to seek more of life than merely to eat and to sleep. And that discontent is flamed higher by the partner of science, advancing technology, through which we can realistically contemplate the practical achievement of the highest of ideals for the condition of man.

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To me, the true significance of the space age, this accelerating age of science and technology in which we now live, is that it is beginning to lead us to wonder, once again, about the nature and purpose of man, about what constitutes the good life and the good society. The space age is bringing philosophy once again to the center of the scene, making it as important as ever it was in the Golden Age of Greece. This is so because the products of science and technology offer us the prospect, at last, of satisfying the material needs of all of the people of earth, if we but have the wit, and the will to organize and to share our resources.

Moreover, in today's world, concern over the nature and purpose of man need no longer be confined to a small elite with the leisure and the interest. Today it can become the domain of an ever-growing class of people who have the free time, the education and the material resources that are the inevitable products of space-age control of nature by reasonable men.

Today science is a matter of concern to everybody—it is a large and growing part of our national effort. The flowering of science seems suddenly to have burst upon us. But, to be truthful, the progress of science has not been sudden, nor has it very often been made in big jumps. Rather it has come, by and large, in steady and persistent small steps. Events sometimes do dramatize for us, suddenly, the heights to which our steps have brought us. So, with the fourth of October of 1957. On that afternoon Sputnik I made us realize that we were living in the age of man's conquest of space.

I shall never forget that Friday evening! It gives me chills to relive the frenzy of excitement that a man-made earth satellite, launched far away in Russia, would pass over Boulder. The phone became hopelessly jammed with radio and newspaper queries, and with calls from other scientists planning to organize cooperative observations. Janet had just started supper hamburgers, which I never ate. My little boy, Jonny, then six, had to go over to the Observatory with me at seven p.m. because we didn't have time to get a baby-sitter, and Janet had a meeting. Next day Jonny told us with pride that he was the first one in his class to hear Sputnik, real, not just on the radio. Indeed, he was probably

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one of the first people in the country to hear its radio transmitter "real" or otherwise!

Few events have so dramatically heralded an advance of science-technology. But, of course, the space age really didn't begin that evening, nor did it even have any sharp date of onset. Its origins go back to Robert Goddard in the twenties, and to Hermann Oberth, still earlier. In a kind of poetic way they go back, perhaps, all the way to Jules Verne, or Jonathan Swift, or even to 1650 to Cyrano de Bergerac's wild concept of a flying machine powered by the lift of the morning dew. Certainly it can be traced to the young Russian, Nicholas Kibaltchitch, jailed nearly a century ago in Saint Petersburg for revolutionary activities, who wrote from his cell of a jet-propelled rocket designed for cosmic travel.

The force of science has always, in modern times, been a major factor shaping social and cultural patterns in the more highly developed countries. Back at the time of the Pilgrims Francis Bacon, for example, stated that "knowledge and power are synonymous." Slightly over one hundred years later Benjamin Franklin urged his countrymen to note that:

> the first drudgery for settling new colonies, which confines the attentions of people to mere necessaries, is now pretty well over; and there are many in every province in circumstances that set them at ease, and afford leisure to cultivate the finer arts and improve the common stock of knowledge.

And he went on to exhort them to increase, through scientific activities, their power over matter and multiply the conveniences or pleasures of life.

Franklin's appreciation of the dream of science was shared by many of his Revolutionary associates. The people of America developed cultural patterns that fostered vigorous science and invention, and promoted its prompt exploitation. The Pennsylvania Assembly, for example, long before creation of the National Science Foundation, voted four hundred and fifty pounds to a basic research program, namely, to observe the 1769 transit of Venus. And after it was all over, William Smith, speaking on

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the floor of the Assembly, stated, "It hath done a credit to our Country which would have been cheaply purchased for 20 times the sum."

Appreciation of the importance and impact of science was at the heart of the philosophical thought of the intellectual leaders of Revolutionary times, who did indeed understand the spirit of the Enlightenment. Many of them had faith that they could demonstrate that freedom has a favorable influence on the growth of useful sciences and arts. And many understood and sought to realize David Hume's concept of the "science of man" and had confidence in their ability to govern themselves rationally and with justice.

Subsequent history has seen, here and elsewhere, the steady growth of the influence of science on social organization and thought. As Julian Huxley has been so eloquent to point out, the prime fact of today's world is the rapidly accelerating pace of scientific progress—we are indeed living in a revolution. Within the very lifetimes of some of us have come: (1) the evolution of manned flight; (2) the rise of the automobile from a curiosity that sometimes worked, to the sleek and highly reliable product of a multibillion dollar industry; (3) the development of amazing new tools like automated lathes, computer-programmed manufacturing units controlled by servo systems, continuous-flow food processing equipment, transistor and integrated circuit electronic components, micro-miniaturized information storage that can print the Holy Bible on a 2″ × 2″ slide and retrieve an image of any page in a fraction of a second; (4) the perfection of many aspects of environmental control such as air conditioning, pest management, outdoor nighttime illumination for sports, *et cetera;* (5) the establishment of huge and profitable industries, like television, where a mere thirty years ago there were only experiments and prototypes.

But perhaps even closer to the heart of what science is all about, history has unfolded, for us who live in this revolution, the superb beauty of discovery of the molecular patterns in a crystal, the organization in a single living cell, the functioning of the ruby that generates a laser beam. In our most powerful

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telescopes we have glimpsed the concept-shaking mysteries of the enigmatic red-shifted quasars. Are these objects the most fantastically brilliant and distant objects in man's ken, dwarfing whole galaxies by their light, which call for revisions of our notions of the origins of the Universe? Or are they much nearer objects, unique in experience in being so red-shifted as to radiate their light in a manner and from a source of previously unsuspected character—which calls for substantial revisions of our ideas of stellar energy generation? Either way, we have before us one of nature's most majestic enigmas. Such is the pace of progress, moreover, that few astronomers doubt that a decade will see the sweeping consequences of its solution, just as few scientists today ridicule our serious search to listen, in the signals of deep space, for intelligible messages from vastly more advanced civilizations than our own.

Before us lie the known riddles, and the even more challenging mysteries still unknown. James B. Conant said it well: "As the beam of the spotlight on the dark stage broadens to show the characters and the settings, the circumference of the circle of darkness grows." It is indeed a time of wonder and of excitement!

But there is another side to the growing power of control over nature afforded us by science and the associated technology. Nearly every advance of science has two faces. One smiles on us and lifts the aspirations of man; the other scowls sternly on all future hopes. For the miracle of the modern automobile there is the rising scourge of car-born air pollution that threatens to choke our Bosnywashes, our giant Boston-N.Y.-Washington megalopoli. The advance of urbanism, made possible by miracles of air conditioning and food transportation, brings us befouled rivers, vanishing privacy and lives of strain and tension. For the miracles that atomic energy has wrought in medicine, industry, power generation, there hangs over us the specter of nuclear war.

For, as Glenn Seaborg has pointed out, "knowledge is born without moral properties. It is man who applies it according to his acquired patterns of behavior . . . Man, not knowledge, is

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the cause of violence." And the power of science magnifies man's ability to achieve utopia or to destroy all that is civilized, or free, or beautiful. The examples are legion, and familiar to all of us.

Molecular biology, for example, offers exciting new prospects and, at the same time, serious moral problems. We can now begin to unfold something of the incredible workings of the purveyors of our genetic heritage; we also sense new hopes for cancer control, defective organ replacement, control of mongolism. But we can also see the shadowy portent of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* of man-made, docile, semimorons for labor in semimoronic tasks, or of the replication of Einsteins or von Neumanns of the future, numberlessly and at will—but will it be for good or ill?

In my own field, the atmospheric sciences, we foresee bringing the entire globe under continuous weather observation by the mid-1970's—and at reasonable cost. And we envision, from this, vastly improved forecasting of storms, freezes, droughts, smog episodes—with attendant opportunities to avert disaster. But we can also see lurking in the beyond-knowledge of today an awesome potential weapon of war—the deliberate manipulation of weather for the benefit of the few and the powerful, to the detriment of the enemy, and perhaps of the bystanders as well. If such powers of weather control emerge—and this is not at all certain to be so—imagine the conflicts of purpose and interest even within a single nation, when the rains and the clouds and the clear days are influenced deliberately. Future work may even show us that unwittingly we have already begun affecting weather—with our jet airplane-induced cirrus blankets and our persistent continental hazes of man's making. How many ways we must be wise!

Perhaps the most exciting still-dream-stage prospect involves the burgeoning of computer science. Our nation's largest and probably most rapidly growing industry is education. To my mind the greatest prospect for personalizing the educational process to meet the individual needs of every student lies in the computer field, in related information storage, retrieval, and proc-

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essing developments for education. But I suspect that nowhere in our whole science-based advance is there greater public fear and distrust than over the threat of the loss of human freedom to mechanization and regimentation through "do not spindle, fold or mutilate." But like it or not, there will be giant strides in command and decision making, automated and semiautomated—in war, economics and other walks of life. We will likely know when the first intercontinental missile of World War III comes, should that happen, in a routine computerized check, on millisecond time scale, of the inventory of space debris; and the decision to retaliate, to enter total war, will probably be made on computer-based advice.

But I really want also to talk about something else having to do with the impact of science. I want to make a few observations about the way science is done, at least as I see it. It seems to me relevant to any discussion of the cultural impact of science or of the public understanding of science. Let me list, one after another, some of the salient traits of science and of the people who practice science.

(1) First, science is constantly, systematically and inexorably revisionary. Science, by the rules of the game, is a self-correcting process and one that is self-destroying of its own errors. The rules of the game are essentially the same in every nation. It is the essence of the scientific way that none of the laws of science is sacred, but stands or falls by the degree to which it works, and by the effectiveness with which it simplifies the apparent complexity of what we see in the natural world about us. The examples of this are legion. One can trace, for example, the evolution of the notion of gravitation and of falling bodies through the work of Aristotle, who believed that heavier bodies have stronger force and fall faster—to the more general and illuminating discoveries of Galileo formulated in his early notions of acceleration, that called for light and heavy bodies to fall at the same rate, if irrelevant effects of air are discounted—to the views of Newton, who quantified and developed general laws of motion and of forces acting at a distance—down to Einstein with the magnificently general relativistic laws of falling bodies.

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Here is the working of a self-revising science, which progressed over many, many years, steadily improving our ability to describe and to predict, with a minimum of *ad hoc* assumptions, what happens when bodies fall in space or in the atmosphere near the earth. It is characteristic of science that it pushes constantly into new and unfamiliar realms of experience, and that when it does so our older laws often prove inadequate and their predictions fail, requiring revisions. One of the prime joys of a scientist's life is to discover these inadequacies, and to develop the improvements that lead to more general laws.

It is because of this eternally revisionary nature that science is disruptive of the *status quo*. And the accelerating pace of science hasn't made this any easier for society to absorb. Every year, the time from the development of a new basic principle to its working application grows shorter.

(2) A related trait of science is its destruction of idols, destruction of the gods that men live by. Science, being self-revising, has no absolute right or absolute justice. It is not concerned with ultimate truths, but with useful, or simple, or aesthetically beautiful interrelationships among things apparently unconnected.

One example that comes to my mind is the notion in pre-Galilean times of the divinity and the perfection of the sun. This notion, much to the distress of the Church and of Galileo, could not be held on an absolute basis, and when the dogma of perfection of the sun was apparently contradicted by observations of sunspots and the obvious interpretation of those observations, something had to give. Galileo and the Church both suffered. But the new concept was far more useful, and ultimately simpler.

To live comfortably with science it is necessary to live with a dynamically changing system of concepts. It is necessary to live with enough conservatism to resist the easy abandonment of concepts, but enough flexibility to be able, when necessary, to switch rather than fight.

In this same way science forces us—through geology, astronomy, meteorology and physics—to resign ourselves to making poetic or allegorical interpretations of the literal statements of

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our most respected cultural authorities—as for example the statements about the origin of the earth that are found in the Bible. There are so many examples of this—the genesis, the day the sun stood still, the parting of the Red Sea, and many others.

In the same way, science has a way of weakening old and respected bonds, like the bonds of family in Japanese and Chinese culture, teacher-student relationships when machines begin to teach, or the relationship of the boss and the employee in automated plants. Science tends to destroy witchcraft in Salem and white supremacy in Mississippi.

(3) Not only are the tenets of science constantly subject to challenge and to revision, but its prophets are under challenge too. For example, we have, many of us, observed and enjoyed the stimulating intellectual exchanges between George Gamow with his "big bang theory" and Fred Hoyle with his continuous creation theory of the origin of the universe. To a nonscientist this disagreement, however, can be a source of great distress. How can these two experts disagree on matters of exact science!

And we have seen how the law of conservation of mass had to be modified and become the law of conservation of mass-energy when the relativistic physics of Einstein emerged. But this revision of scientific "laws" often confuses the layman, who has been taught to think that scientific laws are of nature and not the whim of man. He can't understand why scientists should disagree. And I suspect that one of our big jobs is to make understandable to the general public the reasons why and the limits within which the prophets of science can disagree, argue and take sides—and what is meant when a "law" is refined or abandoned.

(4) Further, the findings of science have an embarrassing way of turning out to be relevant to the customs and to the civil laws of men—requiring these customs and laws also to be revised. For example, the growing knowledge of psychology has forced changes in the laws governing insanity and the rules regarding confinement of patients in mental hospitals. The development of tranquilizers and other drug therapy has even affected the customs of business management and the pulling

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power of the image of the uncompromisingly tough business executive. Likewise our rules of punishment and control for alcoholism, and the use of marijuana, tobacco or LSD, sometimes require changes as a result of new scientific findings about the use of these substances. The advance of medical science can also bring us real embarrassment in these fields, because penal codes are often geared to a system far slower to adapt to change than fits the pace of science.

We are called upon to change even our notions about what is proper or best in the education and the discipline of our children, as we face new findings regarding the nature of intellectual growth, or the tender age of most productive personality development.

(5) Certainly we have seen spectacular changes in the concept of private property and of national borders as we have moved into the space age. For example, at what height above a country is it perfectly all right to fly a satellite without consulting the country it flies over? At what height does it become an invasion to fly an airplane or a balloon? Camera-equipped military or civil satellites do not violate the territory of nations, but U-2 airplanes are quite another matter.

Who needs be consulted, for example, before a single nation tests globe-circling "needles" put into the atmosphere to reflect radio signals? Very strong feelings arose about this matter, just a few years ago, in the International Astronomical Union.

How do we deal with the conflicts between the State of California and the State of Colorado over the water of the Colorado River? Colorado designed its contracts with California in the absence of secure knowledge about the science of hydrology and of river runoff. What are its obligations to live up to its prior contracts, if future science shows that they were based on very bad scientific reasoning and evidence?

Or cloud seeding—whose water has been wrung out of a cloud on the western slope of Colorado's continental divide? Who assures the rancher of the Great Plains that he has not thereby faced a drier summer? Whose air is it that the mainland Chinese contaminate when they test A-bombs? Whose

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radio quiet is shattered by the generation of artificial Van Allen radiation belts? Whose right is it to fluoridate the water of a major city, or to generate radioiodine in the atmosphere?

(6) Moreover, the pace of technological advance gravely threatens the bountiful and restorative power of nature to resist modification. It takes just so many years for a tin can to rust away or for a sandborn glass beer bottle to go again to sand. Polluted air from gigantic super-cities can spread beyond the borders of whole states and cannot be rapidly enough cleansed by the rains and the winds and the curative breathing of plants. Fouled rivers, harbors, beaches, contaminate our food supplies, spread disease, violate the beauty of the out-of-doors, which the space age gives us ever more leisure to enjoy, could we but find it.

For these reasons many nonscientists would like moratoria placed on science for awhile—but this is almost certainly impossible. What are the alternatives?

(7) Another trait of science that leads to much hostility or misunderstanding by the nonscientist is the fact that science is practiced by a small elite. Worse yet, the scientists who make up this elite are hard for others to understand. They are obscure, if not threatening. These scientists have a special language, verbal and mathematical, all their own. They use common words in unfamiliar ways, and in strangely straitjacketed senses. When they speak about truth they are not speaking about absolute truth. And their language of mathematics is mixed up in ordinary sentences so that it often becomes difficult, abbreviated and abstract for others to understand.

Too, this small scientific elite has cultural patterns discernibly different from those of the rest of society. For example, a good many scientists do their science for fun—while to much of the rest of the world it seems like expensive or almost capricious fun. It looks like fun with other people's money, and lives.

Within this scientific elite uncertainty is a daily actuality, and sometimes scientists don't seem to others to be sufficiently worried by this uncertainty. To the outsider, they often look irresponsible. Their strange and inconstantly-held concepts are to them matters of interest, like the plays of a chess game.

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Knocking down sacred principles is a matter of challenge and of satisfaction. They often deny familiar concepts for the sake of argument, without even believing the denial. Their reasons for rejecting concepts are often hard to explain to nonscientists. They seem frivolous, or authoritarian—as witness the great uproar about the almost universal scientific repudiation, a few years ago, of the popularly appealing concepts of Immanuel Velikovsky and his *Worlds in Collision*.

This whole business tends to breed among laymen suspicion and distrust of scientists. It sometimes leads to fears that the scientists are "mad," irresponsible, "Red" or "far-out."

And all of this would be a problem even if it were not also painfully true that scientists, in addition to being members of an intellectual elite, are also people. They have, alas, all of the foibles, jealousies, ambitions and weaknesses of other people.

It is particularly unfortunate that an air of distrust of science and its practitioners occurs just at this juncture in time, when the universality of the language of science—the ability to communicate with each other possessed by scientists of all countries —offers the hope of bridging the deep political abysses between the East and the West.

And it is still worse because if ever in history we needed optimism, we today need the optimism of science. We need it to give us the courage to tackle creatively and forcefully the awesome problems pushed on us by the pace of science-based progress. Think, for example, of the world population explosion that will bring 400 million people in the United States by the year 2000, and that means that half of the Earth's people will be of Oriental race in the not so distant future when world population reaches ten billion.

The problem is still further compounded by the fact that progress—and optimism—are desperately needed in the social sciences. But the social sciences are under even deeper suspicion than the physical sciences, even though they are identical with these in formal construction. Maybe the problem here is that they deal with our pocketbooks. Certainly they are like other aspects of science, revisionary and revolutionary—and this means that in economic, social and behavioral science fields there are big

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revolutions and revisions ahead. In these fields of science we are much closer to our Dark Ages and the changes may be sweeping. In the sciences that deal with men's interactions, we still have unburned witches to deal with. There are many wrong turns ahead, in these sciences—but it is an essential of science to blunder down some of these wrong turns, to develop and to test wrong hypotheses. That is the way we get ahead. And the social sciences must not be thrown down the drain because of some of the essential blundering that will make real progress possible.

We have somehow to surmount the quaint, almost anachronistic misconception—not only in the general public but often within the ranks of the physical scientists—that the social sciences differ essentially from the physical because here we are dealing with *man*.

(8) The trait that to me seems the most socially important about science, however, is that it is a major source of man's dissatisfaction with the world as it is—it is a wellspring of man's discontent with the *status quo*. The implicit promises of science and technology are the heart of the present rebellion of the underfed and the underclothed. They give a clear achievable prospect of food and comfort for all, if only all the people on earth become sufficiently determined to use science and technology to this end. Moreover, our Telstars and our radios, our color movies and our magazines, give the poor nations a way to know how poor they really are.

Surely fifty years will see the harvest of the major fruits of science and engineering in the underdeveloped regions of the earth, whether we in America like it or not. If we stand in the way of this irresistible impact of science on the developing cultural patterns, we will be destroyed. If we ignore the approaching tides of progress, we may find ourselves a small island isolated in a vast hostile sea.

But above all else, the thing for us to realize about the scientific revolution is simply that *it is here*. We are now deep into the age of science. It cannot be ignored. Jet airplanes circle the globe in hours. Images of wealth or poverty, or of a particular political ideology, flash into millions of homes everywhere, instantly. Weapons systems can eradicate hundreds of millions

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of lives in minutes, and we have not been the only nation diligently applying technological skills to the problem of how to design and manage such weapons systems.

My voice can be embossed for my great-grandchildren, yet unborn, on thin mylar and ferrous oxide tape. I can listen, as I did a few nights ago, to Sviatoslav Richter's magnificent playing of Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* recorded on the 25th of February 1958 at Sofia, Bulgaria. And in the background of this music I can hear the coughs of men I shall never know, whose language I cannot speak, but who are my brothers listening with me in my living room.

I can strip a tiny fleck of skin from my body, and have it preserved, intact, alive and growing indefinitely in a laboratory test tube, so that a curious inquisitor can examine microscopically the genetic code that makes me most of what I am, even long after I am through being it.

I can place my eye to the viewing screen of a giant telescope and peer into the silent depths of the Virgo Cluster of island universes, noting the soft glow of the one thousand billion suns that generate there the strange life processes of a hundred million planets, where creatures think out their days, forever beyond communication with us.

It is here! This age of science. And with it some of the most compelling ideas of mankind. The magnificent structure of the relativity theory of Einstein, a notion that has stirred the very foundations of our thinking, a creation of beauty that ranks with the greatest of Beethoven. Or the incredible principle of indeterminacy of Heisenberg, with its idea of the unavoidable uncertainty of definite knowledge about particular events in nature. This is a challenging notion that sets limits on the knowable.

Or the thrilling concept of the continuous creation of the universe, with its picture of stars and men coming and going through an infinite span of time—yet living always in a place in space that appears to its inhabitants but a few billion years old.

It is here, this age of science! And with it comes its promise of what the life of man can be, with food for all, with education, with human freedom, with a stable population. With this age of

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technology comes the realistic expectation that even the added billions can live in harmonious equilibrium with a natural environment of quality, and one that man can appreciate the more because he knows what a rare thing it is in the universe. For man life need not be nasty, brutish, short—but a life rich with peace of mind and rewarding leisure tasks, with comfort and health, and with a language that transcends political ideology.

But to bring to substance this great dream for humanity we must know that this is what we really want and be willing to work to achieve it. To a tragic degree we in the West have drifted, not so much for lack of willingness to pay the price, but for lack of knowing what it is that we have really wanted—aside from factories, and a rise in the standard of living.

In our explosively changing world it is no longer sufficient to live with philosophies or religions simply handed down from an older generation. We must take up a vital, flexible and ever-evolving concern about the nature and purpose of man, and about what constitutes a good life and a good society in the light of today's communications, population growth, races, political systems, weapons. We must exhibit a concern with philosophy that is geared to the chain-reacting growth of science, and that is consonant with the impact of science on man's changing conception of himself and his world.

Rather than simply fight for the preservation of the old things that are good, we must plan creatively also to shape the new. We must commit ourselves to dare to build the world we want, knowing that it is possible if we but demand it—and if we use intelligently all the potent forces of science, the arts and the humanities that are at our disposal.

There will always be dangers. But I hold with Thornton Wilder, who said, "Every good and excellent thing stands moment by moment at the razor edge of danger, and must be fought for." To be what we can be, we must be unafraid to place ourselves, our ways of life, our economic systems, in the microscope of science—and we must have the courage to put to practice the findings that come out, no matter how hard they hit at the patterns of our folkways. To be what we can be, we must first and foremost know what we want to be.

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Letter from England

ANTHONY BURGESS

My final activity of 1966 was to appear on a very brief British Independent Television program along with a man of title (a baronet or something) who is president of the British Duodecimal Society. It is always heartening to discover, in a Britain increasingly conformist and genuflectory to the ruling oligarchy, small eccentric pockets of resistance. The British Duodecimal Society wants to abolish 10 (I refer to the number and not the symbol) as the head of the numerical hierarchy and to substitute One Dozen. One Dozen is to be represented as 10, and our existing digraphs for 10 and 11 are to become, respectively, the figures 2 and 3 turned upside down. This means that 3 × 10 will equal three dozen (30), and the useful Arabic zero will be in the service of a more reasonable kind of arithmetic than that traditionally imposed on us by the tyranny of ten (or 2 upside down).

I think I was persuaded to appear on this program because I have been one of the few loud voices raised in opposition to the proposed changeover of our decimal-duodecimal-octal British currency to a purely decimal one. In 1971, we are told, there will be no more pounds, shillings, pence, halfpence, florins, half-crowns, threepenny bits and guineas. There will be a heavy dollar, probably called a New Pound, and cents (or New Pennies) each of a value of 2.4 of our present penny. I've protested against this not because of arteriosclerotic obscurantist xenophobic Little-England conservatism, but because our British system—first learned from Charlemagne but justified pragmatically over many centuries of use—is the most convenient and comprehensive in the world. A decimal coinage can admit of division only by 2, 4, 5, 10, 25 and 50, but our pounds, shillings and pence will yield also to 3, 6, 8, 12, 24 and many other useful divisors. A British pound, true, is not divisible by either 7 or 9, but add one shilling to your pound and you get twenty-one shillings or one guinea, and both 7 and 9 slice into that beautifully. It is proposed that we give all this up and submit to a system that was only adopted (on both sides of the Atlantic) in a revolutionary fit of pseudo-rationalism. What is the point of enthroning 5 as your chief divisor? We are surely past counting on our toes and fingers. Computers, like natural cells, reject 5; their arithmetic is binary. Decimalization is not only mad; it is out of date.

One thing that horrifies me about the dollar is that attempted division by 3 (and surely a dollar has to be split three ways occasionally) produces a recurring decimal, an abstraction. But aren't cents—in any multiple other than the nickel, dime, quarter or fifty-cent piece—themselves abstractions? When a Third Avenue bartender tots up a heavy round of drinks he always seems to have to do it on paper. This, surely, is because he can't visualize, say, 85¢ as real money; it's an element in a calculation, part of an abstract process. No British barmaid or barman ever has to use a pencil and a pad. Five gins at 2s 6d each? Easy. You conceive an image of five

✪ ANTHONY BURGESS begins with this column a series of reports for the SCHOLAR on the contemporary British scene.

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half-crowns (or two-and-sixpenny pieces)—very solid, very tangible. Long experience has taught you that four of those (which the common man calls half-dollars or tosheroons) make ten shillings. Add another one and you have twelve-and-six (12s 6d). Nothing to it.

The British Duodecimal Society, which fights in vain for the enthronement of One Dozen (spelled 10), is naturally appalled at the impending disappearance of the shilling (a duodecimal coin: twelve pence in it, or four threepenny pieces). I have not yet heard complaints from the British Octal Society (if there is one) about the coming liquidation of the half-crown. A crown used to exist as a coin in its own right. Now it's a mere memory, although the term itself is never used whole. Five shillings (which was the value of the crown) is often called a dollar—or, in rhyming slang, an Oxford (Oxford scholar)—and half-a-dollar is, naturally, a synonym for a half-crown. The beauty of this coin lies in the fact that there are exactly eight of them in a pound, and this octal division seems to satisfy a deeply rooted instinct in man. Even Americans call a quarter "two bits," which means there must be eight bits to an American dollar. In Malaya, where they have Straits dollars (nine to the British guinea, so that $1 = 2s 4d), some of the natives insist on dividing the *ringgit* (*satu ringgit* is $1) into eight *kupangs*, and a *kupang* is a coin that doesn't officially exist. Nevertheless, it's more real to many than a ten-cent piece. Wasn't the dollar originally a "piece of eight," and doesn't the dollar sign itself stand for the fracturing of that number?

I'm aware that these very insular and somewhat antiquated worries about the death of British money as Chaucer and Shakespeare and Dickens knew it will conjure no pangs in American souls. Americans, like continental Europeans, have (I am thinking of the fox in Æsop) lost their tails and must be happy to see England too decaudated. But cannot America, which is as devoted to the historic past as only a progressive nation can be, come to see that in a combined decimal, octal and duodecimal money system the commonsensical past and the rational future dance perfectly together, and determine on a reform of the United States coinage that will be, in effect, a forgiving return to the old way of the mother country? Computers, which follow natural cells in their devotion to the binary system, bank their data in eights. There are still sixty minutes in an hour and twice twelve hours in a day. Forget about those mad Frenchmen and come home. And let Britain (perhaps following America's example) also come home.

❧

THE latter part of the old year was a bad time for the threatening of British institutions. The British Broadcasting Corporation announced in very good time that it was presenting over Christmas a daringly new dramatic interpretation of *Alice in Wonderland*. This, it warned, would not be suitable for children. At once, before anybody had seen a synopsis, let alone a preview, the B.B.C. came under attack for tampering with tradition, vandalizing great art, even (somewhat obscurely) corrupting the young. There were even questions asked in Parliament. The coinage could be interfered with, but not *Alice*. The public disquiet and anger represented a topping-up on the shocked reaction to previous, but well-remembered, B.B.C. enormities—a documentary play, for instance, called *Up the Junction*, which dealt frankly with fornication and abortion in London's Dickensian East End. And it happened that, at the time of the announcement about the new *Alice*, a young television playwright had written a horrifying version of *Cinderella*, with Prince Charming strangling poor Cinders: this, although commissioned by the B.B.C., was rejected summarily on submission of the script, but it was vaguely considered to be a straw in the wind of B.B.C. policy.

This advance publicity for *Alice* ensured huge watching figures and even front-page coverage of the private preview as well as the public transmission. When—appropriately, on the feast of the Slaughter of the Innocents—*Alice in Wonderland* was

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screened, everybody felt very let down. The only shock was in the discovery that so lively, humorous and amiable a book could be given so glum a dramatic rendering. The adapter and producer was Jonathan Miller, a doctor of medicine who has gained a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic as a witty stage satirist, but is now apparently reaching a phase when he isn't quite sure what he wants to be—anthropologist, sociologist, TV man, Victorian specialist, literary critic or (that most deadly of contemporary phenomena) "controversial personality." His thesis in the new *Alice* was that the true fabric of the dream was best presented by de-animalizing and decartomorphizing its characters, so that Wonderland was peopled by recognizable Victorian "types"—smoking-capped dons and bombazined ladies.

There cannot be any doubt that Lewis Carroll's beasts and playing-card animations were meant to point, in good-natured satire, the eccentricities of grown-ups as a child might see them, especially in the ambience of a Victorian Oxford college. To strip off these thin disguises is—brashly and naïvely—to proclaim the obvious and destroy art. Miller assembled a formidable professional cast, including Sir John Gielgud, Sir Michael Redgrave and Peter Sellers, but they had nothing to do except caricature Victorian senility and feeble-mindedness. Had they been allowed to retain their animal superstructures (or, in the case of Peter Sellers, the pasteboard carapace of King of Hearts), that element of caricature would already have been taken care of; they would then have had an opportunity to individualize. Morever, there is something absurd about two old men on the beach reminiscing about being taught by an old tortoise, and the irrelevance of the jokes about reeling, writhing and fainting, in coils becomes embarrassing. And if, at the Mad Hatter's tea party, the Hatter himself is viable in human form, the Dormouse and the March Hare cannot also claim naked anthropomorphism: that way the exquisiteness of the joke is lost.

For his Alice, Miller chose a haughty young girl with a spotty complexion and a voice of inept flatness. The flatness, Miller claimed, was appropriate to a dream. Well, an assumed hypnotic monotone might come off, but that is a different thing from innate vocal dullness. And, anyway, the implied speech-tones of Alice's lines in the book itself suggest liveliness, sharpness of mind, bubbling bewilderment, humor, the delectable bossiness of a young and charming girl. The Millerian Alice had nothing to do with Carroll, nor, for that matter, did a lot of the dialogue, which Miller evidently wrote himself. A whole stanza of "You Are Old, Father William" was (I think inadvertently) left out, but the total indifference to Carroll's verses was symptomatic. The remarkable climax of the trial scene, where Alice cries "You're nothing but a pack of cards" and finds all the personages swooping about her in sudden flat pasteboard, was changed to a dissolution brought about by the Queen's shouting "Off with her head," which she had shouted often enough before with no very terrible result.

I will say no more about this admittedly clever but wholly misguided perversion of a profound and funny book, except to express regret that the simple-mindedness of today's British young should be exalted into a hitherto unknown clear-headedness. Why, they are all bold enough and clever enough to show the reality underlying complex works of art. Let us now take Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* and weed all the laughs out of it. It is not seemly to laugh, except very bitterly, in the age of Vietnam and universal famine. Besides, that Victorian age was the nightmare workshop of all our present horrors, and it is unfair that the dwellers in it, who found it a kind of paradise, should be allowed to rest in peace. Drag up Alice and make her, with the aid of techniques learned from the films of Cocteau and Robbe-Grillet, learn what a *cauchemar* her summer's day dream really was. Take J., George and Harris and make them see what their trip down the Thames really is—an attempted escape into history which rises from its tombs and documents and bites them with bubonic plague. Three

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men alone together? They must be homosexual. They enjoy their food? Let the cameras range creepily over heaps of beef and veal-and-ham pie and apple turnovers and then zoom on to the writhing maggots. Let their dog Montmorency be messily run over by a hansom cab. Hold that shot of the mangled limbs, let the dying screams serve for postludial music, then roll your credits.

These Victorian writers, however frothy and escapist the books they produced, knew at least as much about their own age as we do. Similarly, Shakespeare could contrive the highly wrought filigree of utopian pastoralism while the bears Harry Hunks and Sackerson tore dogs apart alive in Paris Garden, and men and women died of plague, and traitors were shown their smoking entrails *in extremis* at Tyburn. There is a new puritanism about in Britain which is highly suspicious of simple gaiety. The stage must proclaim the Theater of Fact, and fact must be shameful and devastating—limbless children in Vietnam, dogs lapping watery excrement among Calcutta's starving. Well, one might go some way toward denouncing a frivolous dismissal of today's ghastliness in the art of today, but to mangle the art of the past in petulant vindictiveness is quite another matter. For the true motive behind Jonathan Miller's interpretation of *Alice* was to deprive a child of her dream, to show her Victorian life as the twentieth century sees it. This goes further, perhaps, than mere slaughter of the innocents. For Alice was dragged from the grave as a zombie (she sounded like one) and made to participate in a sophisticated feast that gave off cachou-whiffs of corruption.

❧

I MENTIONED a new puritanism in Britain. This may seem to accord ill with miniskirts and swinging London, wherever that is. But—despite the dope-jags and the free-for-all sex—the puritanism is undoubtedly there; indeed, it is probably nastier than the old Massachusetts Brownism or Cromwellian theocracy, since it frequently masquerades as permissiveness. A middle-aged man has just been sent to trial for indecent assault because, when a couple of miniskirted teenagers visited his home, he put his hands on their knees. His gesture seems to me a reasonable one: if you see something you like the look of, your instinct is to touch it. But the girls cried aloud their puritanical horror, and now this man is up on a major charge. Sometimes, when I travel on the London Underground, I am faced on the seats opposite by a phalanx of silk thighs that cannot be accorded the static tribute of pure aesthetic appreciation. I am moved, I am excited, yet I must keep my face stony. An involuntary leer of admiration would bring all the well-oiled apparatus of the law into action, or at least a bloody nose from a boy-friend. The seventeenth-century Brownists and Cromwellians led nobody into temptation, but nowadays, in lubricious London, a delectable ice-topping covers a sad cake of dead-sea fruit and purgative bran.

The young seem to have all the sex they need, but sleeping together has an aura of duty about it (stern daughter of the voice of God): little joy and, I should imagine, little skill. In any television play the first kiss has to be followed at once by the first postcoital languor. It is a terrible thing to be square and chaste and thus fall into the hands of the living God. If there were more passion I should not be so (and this sounds, I know, puritanical enough) censorious, but there is too much of the fulfilling of cold rituals, the practice of a religion without love in it. Even the gestures of protest, which admit a ghost of passion, are generated collectively: it was once the Bomb, now it is the Vietnam war. There is little evidence of the thrust of the individual will; there is a terrible fear of nonconformism.

It is appropriate that the stink of puritanism should cling to everything; after all, we have a government that is closer to stern Oliver than to the dissolute Stuarts. Freedom of conscience is frowned on; let every human act find appropriate legislation. If we smoke cigarettes we will

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kill ourselves; therefore increase the number of no-smoking railway carriages, ban television cigarette commercials, consider a total prohibition of smoking in public places. It is bad that British citizens should seek the sun in foreign parts, therefore reduce their hard-currency allowance. Make the price of whisky exorbitant. Let us brace ourselves for the economic struggle and let us hope—since the British spirit thrives on stringencies—that this struggle will last a long time. Then further wholesome curbs on free will may be introduced. It will be in the interests then of the puritan economy that miniskirts should be shorter still, saving material. And if we are intolerably tempted, there is always the cold water of the law to be poured on our rising passions. England swings. Indeed, and on a British-made gallows.

Status

ROBERT LESLIE CONLY

Not by the broken-fendered car I drive
(By neighbors not completely understood
Who wish I'd move it from the neighborhood)
Nor by the poetry I write, nor yet
The richness of the fur around your neck.
But by the sum of love that I can feel
Not just for you but for the pelicans
That whistle past my window on their way
To see what's up a half mile down the beach
And by the want of wariness I see
In any eyes that come this close to me.

✪ ROBERT LESLIE CONLY has been a writer and editor on the staff of *Newsweek*, *Pathfinder*, and, since 1951, the *National Geographic*. He has contributed articles, essays, short stories and verse to many periodicals.

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INTERVIEW

W. H. Auden

POLLY PLATT

"Come in, come in, we've already started tea, do you mind?"

W. H. Auden stood in the dim entranceway of the Austrian peasant's cottage he recently immortalized in *About the House,* his bulky figure stooped, his stance welcoming. His smile, what you could see of it, was uncertain, for you were late: the approach to the poet hailed as the modern Goethe had been an odyssey through archaic allegory. The long road from Vienna had detoured through sugar beets and dead-ended in a circle without outlet around an onion-steepled church. The heroic cycle of hope, frustration and despair had closed with the revival of hope at the discovery of cart tracks to the poet's threshold. You had arrived. But where? Through a slat gate, up a slippery apple orchard, past a manure pit and a bed of zinnias and cabbages, you had found the house, yellow clay, one story, not old but built to last forever, and had pulled the iron bell handle; waiting for the door to open, watching the cars far below on the Autobahn slashing across the quiet fields, you understood that you were in Arcadia after the Fall, and that you were twenty minutes late.

"I'm afraid you've come on a bad day for a talk," the poet said. "The Sunday papers have just come in from London and we're in the midst of the crosswords."

As he spoke, in a British English unaltered by twenty-five years' residence in America, his face emerged in the half-light. Deep lines cut into the flesh like gashes, across the forehead, down the cheekbones, under the eyes, over the chin, arresting, almost frightening, as were the eyes, so close together by the large nose they seemed as powerful as three. It was the ravaged face of the surviving hero, tormented but undefeated, with thick sandy hair and full lips decorating it preposterously in a devil's joke which the poet himself echoed with the careless incongruity of his dress. He was clothed in ill-fitting gray flannels held up by suspenders, a blue shirt buttoned to the throat without a tie, and plaid slippers with the soles peeling off in slivers.

What did you say to Goethe in suspenders? But what did you expect? A tunic? A toga?

He led the way into a deep-windowed den, bright with gayly painted peasant wardrobes and orange and white checked curtains, and crammed with the implements of pleasures anticipated or just enjoyed. Stacks of books, records, tapes, newspapers, bottles and overflowing ashtrays covered most of the available surfaces, including the floor. Blue and white laundry hung on a wooden rack around the blue clay peasant stove, Richard Strauss and Stravinsky stared down from drawings on the walls, wheel-like iron chandeliers hung from the ceiling. It was the space described in *About the House* by the poem called "The Common Life," dedicated to Chester Kallman, the American librettist who collaborated with Mr. Auden on his libretto for Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress:*

✪ POLLY PLATT, a free-lance writer, lives in Vienna with her husband, Alexander Grchich, Austrian diplomat with UNESCO, and their five children. Miss Platt worked for several years as a feature writer for the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin* and later as a reporter for the New York *Post.* She has lived abroad since 1954.

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A living room, the catholic area you
(Thou, rather) and I may enter
without knocking, leave without a bow, confronts each visitor with a style,

a secular faith: he compares its dogmas
with his, and decides whether
he would like to see more of us. (Spotless rooms
where nothing's left lying about

chill me, so do cups used for ashtrays or
smeared with lipstick: the homes I warm to,
though seldom wealthy, always convey a feeling
of bills being promptly settled

with checks that don't bounce.) . . .*

The poet backed into a corner seat behind one of the two tables in the room, this one a card table laid with three blue and white cups and saucers, and a dish of chocolate biscuits in the midst of four butt-filled ashtrays. Presently Chester Kallman appeared with a matching teapot and the London *Times,* and sat down. A plumpish, slightly balding man in his late forties with a round smooth face, he wore an open shirt, slacks and brown leather thongs.

Mr. Auden poured tea.

"Poetry is the only art people haven't learned yet how to consume," he said, "like soup. They hang copies of great paintings, they pipe music, and as for novels . . ."

"They abridge them," said Mr. Kallman, already bent over his crossword puzzle.

"You can't do that to poetry," said Mr. Auden. "You have to read it. There will always be people who like it, just as there always have been. It is in a better position now. Just as before the camera, painting had to record many things having nothing to do with art, so before printing, poetry was the normal thing to write for recording because verse is easier to remember. Now, poetry is freed from many things which were rather a burden."

What should poetry do?

Mr. Auden offered the chocolate biscuits around and lit a cigarette. Elbows on the table, he held it in front of his mouth as he talked so that his face was a smoky mask.

He said: "We are born in sin and it is very difficult to behave well. Human history is a sorry record, criminal and pathological. But life is as it is: difficult, but not impossible. You have to try to live as decently as you can, and not despair. One likes to think that poetry can help in certain ways . . . Some people write irresponsibly about despair. If they really gave up, they would commit suicide."

"Or eat too much," said Mr. Kallman, without looking up.

"We all owe a great deal to Eliot," said Mr. Auden, "both as a poet and as a person. The way he behaved was an example for all of us. His work was so idiosyncratic and extremely original that as a poet you couldn't learn much from him except by imitating him. You could learn more from Rilke and Yeats. Yeats, as a politically interested poet, had the great advantage of living in a country where everything took place on a scale small enough to be totally comprehended. You can't write about anything unless you know all about it; and, of course, unless you have a personal interest in it. I was very much influenced by Horace."

He sipped his tea. "Rewriting is what I've been doing recently. Also, translating the Russian poet Voznesensky. The question of preserving the Russian rhythms and rhymes is *frightfully* difficult." He closed his eyes and the gashes across his brow deepened. "I've just been *staring* at it. Revision of one's own work is, of course, much easier.

"I've just finished revising a volume of poems written between '27 and '57, and am going to London with it now under my arm, like a great baby. Rewriting can be exasperating, when you see how clumsy you've been, but there is not the agony of starting a new work—which must be an absolutely new step, like a child learning to walk, consistent with one's direction but also untried, different . . ."

The poet, now sixty, leaned back and smiled. "This is one of the good things

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about getting older. You begin to know your craft better. You know how to push yourself further, and in which direction. I wouldn't be twenty again for anything. There were so many things one couldn't handle, so many things one didn't know. Who one was, for instance. This is a great help, to know who you are. Actually, I haven't found any disadvantages in getting older. I enjoy myself very much."

Then he talked faster. As he gained momentum he had a way of crowding several words into one and stretching out one very long.

"It is my private belief that artists don't die before they have done the work they can do, are meant to do. Even with Mozart you feel, what *more* could he do . . . The only exception is Keats. He was two people, wasn't he, the person who wrote the poetry and the person who wrote the letters? If he had kept on, perhaps the two people would have come together, and you would have had something really extraordinary. But the others . . . I feel it strongly, they die when they have done what they can. Look at Proust, who kept going until the last page, then died." He slowed down, and shrugged. "Oh, perhaps it is pure superstition, absolute nonsense. When they die, they die, and can't do any more. The reverse is certainly not true. They go on living for years after they have said all they have to say."

He rose and edged his way out from behind the table. "Would you like to see the house? I'll show you the kitchen first. Chester is a marvelous cook."

"I'm an eclectic," said Mr. Kallman, glancing up from his crossword with a gesture toward the cookbooks sharing the floor with dictionaries and encyclopedias.

"I got the idea of writing a cycle of poems about the spaces in a house by actually owning one," said Mr. Auden, shuffling slightly as he moved across the floor. "An apartment is completely different, like a nomad's tent. I adore mine in New York—the only unprovincial town in the world, by the way—on Eighth Street near First Avenue, best place in town for getting a cab, wonderful little food shops nearby, but the roof leaks and you never know when you'll be thrown out. I bought this place in '57 and spend about half the year here, and the winter half in New York. For the summer I wanted to be in a wine-drinking country and near an opera house."

The cycle's "palace kitchen for kingdoms where royalty would be incognito," a large L-shaped space at the center of the house, was a jet-age gourmet's lair; uncapped spices, half-empty vintage wine bottles and greasy frying pans embellished the tops of smooth white appliances for cooking, grilling, washing and storing.

The poet smiled with the memory of last night's dinner, declined to describe it, and opened the door to the guest room. This space that he had called the "shrine to friendship" held two simple iron beds, two windows to the woods outside and in the corner a crucifix. A great orange cat was curled up on the floor.

"That's Rhadames," he said. "He came from New York. We always name cats after opera characters. To get to my workroom we must go out and around."

His "Cave of Making," where "silence is turned into objects," a small dormer room reached by an outside staircase, was rugless and unfurnished except for neat piles of books and a desk on a raised platform by the window. It was dark now; you couldn't see the zinnias and cabbages, only the distant lights of the cars flashing by on the Autobahn.

"I get up early and sit over my coffee, then come up here and work until eleven," Mr. Auden said. "Then I go shopping until lunchtime. After lunch I attend to letters, then work again between teatime and cocktailtime. In the evenings I generally read, or go into Vienna to the opera. I just finished reading a book about Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian non-Nazi beheaded for not voting for the Anschluss. People tend to think martyrdom is useless; it clearly is not."

Back in the living room Mr. Kallman was still at his crossword. Mr. Auden resumed his place on the corner seat and

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listed the historic surroundings of his property. A castle down the road had been burned by the Turks, Napoleon's troops had marched past the church, bronze age articles had been found nearby.

"The Carolingian Empire stopped at the next town," he said. "I like being in a German-speaking country. German is a marvelous language. It requires being spoken by an educated tongue—any concierge can speak excellent French—and it is good for popular songs because even the simplest things said in it appear to have great weight.

"One of the great things about English for writing poetry is that it is a mongrel language with such a rich vocabulary, words from the German, Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, French. Because of the dropped inflections you can make nouns verbs and verbs nouns. And it is probably an advantage that rhymes are hard to find, a trap for the sort of person who uses banal rhymes. While in Italian it is difficult, even when writing prose, to avoid rhymes, in English it is at once revealed if a person uses a word because he must, in order to get the rhyme. Of course it is maddening that the third person singular demands an 's' on the verb and the plural of nouns takes an 's' . . . Let me try and show you what I mean . . ."

He gazed out the window a moment. "Take sheep," he began.

"Sheep is the worst possible example," said Mr. Kallman.

"Well . . . the lion leaps but the lions leap," said Mr. Auden. "Let's just say that in the English indicative rhyming is particularly difficult. I enjoy rhymes, almost any rhymes." He put his head back and closed his eyes, then recited: " 'Dies in the singular/Common we define/But its plural cases/Are always mascu-line.' " He spread his hands out and smiled. "We used to say that in school. I'm sorry, I know I'm hard to understand—that limey accent—"

"Not limey accent, just mumbling," said Mr. Kallman.

"But then I can't understand Americans sometimes either," said Mr. Auden. "A Southern lady seemed to be talking to me once about her bowels—quite confusing until it turned out she was discussing debutante balls. One thing I enjoy particularly about America is not being able to place people socially the moment they open their mouths, as you can in England. There are so many right and wrong ways to speak there, it changes with the community, just as the definition of the right side of the tracks is quite different in Vermont from that in Virginia. A great book could be written on this. Very complicated, though."

The poet rose to draw the curtains, then sat down again.

"Expatriate? I don't know what the word means," he said. "I more or less left the Midlands, where I was born, at seven, when I went to boarding school. I left England because there the cultural family is so small. While I love my cultural cousins and aunts very much, while I adore the cooking and climate, it is rather small for living in all the time. In the old days there was the Empire to explore. Now, one goes to America.

"American cultural life is definitely not a family life. You are on your own, and this teaches you to work. To work means to take the trouble to do your job properly. I think the English are very intelligent, but I find them lazy. Perhaps they are exhausted from their accomplishments of the nineteenth century."

Although he has lectured in most American states, has taught literary history in various American colleges, including Swarthmore and Smith, and has been a United States citizen since 1946, Mr. Auden hesitated to discuss the differences between America and Europe.

"Very hard to pin down," he said. "One great difference is nature. You can't talk about Mother Nature in America, the climate is too violent. People haven't lived there long enough to give one the feeling of a humanized landscape.

"Then there is the attitude to money. In Europe, having money means doing as you like. You want to have as much as you can and the others should have as

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little as possible. In America, money is symbolic, a sign, for one thing, of manhood. It is every European's dream to be a *rentier,* to inherit enough to do as he pleases. But the American *rentier* goes out and works even harder than before, or takes to drink, or visits a psychiatrist.

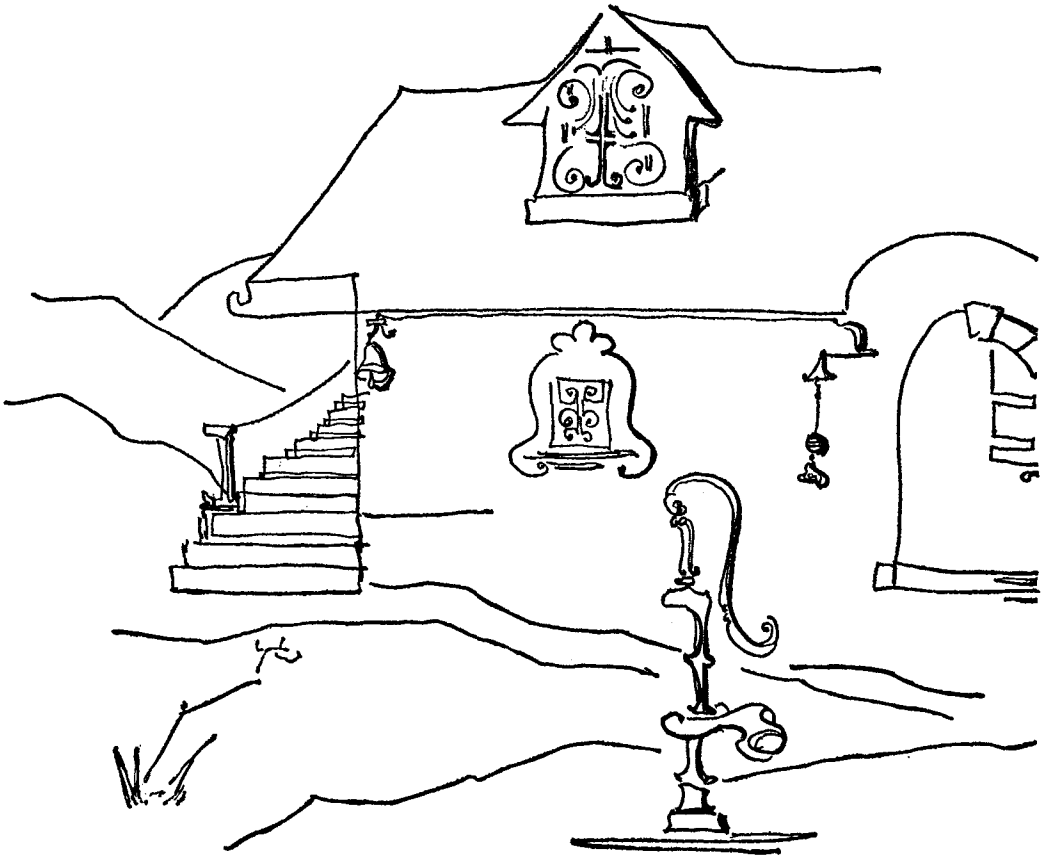
"I find Americans marvelous. Perhaps a bit anxious about being popular, a bit worried about their status, but admirable in many ways, particularly in how they get on together."

What would his next book be?

"I never give away my vices or discuss the future," he said with a smile.

He gazed out the dark window toward the fields where, that afternoon, women in long skirts and white bandannas had been bent over sugar beets. Rhadames rubbed against his leg as he took a long drag on his cigarette.

"I am superstitious," he said then, disappearing behind the smoke. "I never talk of what I am doing before it is done."



SKETCH BY SANDAY OF MR. AUDEN'S HOUSE AT KIRCHSTETTEN, AUSTRIA

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CONtroversy

The Assassins

JOHN KAPLAN

The present furor over the assassination of President Kennedy and the work of the Warren Commission can best be understood as part of a four-stage controversy —of which we are now just entering the fourth stage. First, in 1964, just a few months after the assassination, Thomas G. Buchanan *(Who Killed Kennedy?)* and Joachim Joesten *(Oswald: Assassin or Fall Guy?)* put forth quite different theories which agreed that the President had been slain by a right-wing conspiracy. Although both books enjoyed large sales outside the United States—and to some extent in it—within the perspective of only three years they are so inept that it is embarrassing to read them over. Second came the Warren Commission *Report,* followed shortly by its twenty-six volumes of documentation. Inside the United States and to a markedly smaller extent outside it, the work of the Warren Commission and the lavish, indeed uncritical, praise of it quieted most doubts. Then about nine months ago as we reached the third stage, a second generation of unofficial inquiries into the assassination began appearing. These, although they differ enormously from each other, have had a single impact on the public mind and have at least to a substantial segment of the American people cast great doubt not only upon the Commission's conclusions but on the ability and integrity of the Commissioners themselves. Finally and only in the past few months, we have begun to hear not only more and more evidence to throw the Commission's conclusions into question but also, for the first time, demands for action from those who have the power to compel action.

To understand how this has happened we must look carefully at stage three, the stage at which the first serious and specific criticisms of the Commission appeared. This stage consists essentially of five books: *Inquest,* by Edward J. Epstein; *Rush to Judgment,* by Mark Lane; *Whitewash,* by Harold Weisberg; *The Oswald Affair,* by Leo Sauvage; and *The Second Oswald,* by Richard H. Popkin. Although these books differ greatly in detail and in theses from one another, all share two characteristics. First, they rely primarily on the Warren Commission's own testimony and exhibits; and second, they agree that the Warren Commission, in evaluating even its own evidence, did at very best an incompetent job, and at worst, something that can only darkly be hinted at.

We must therefore draw a sharp distinction between the *Report* of the Warren Commission and its twenty-six volumes of supporting evidence. Although the *Report* itself comes under criticism on almost every conceivable ground, most of the ammunition for this attack is contained in the evidence that the Commission itself published. It has only rarely been argued that the stenographers did not take down what the witnesses really said, that the physical exhibits were altered, or that the expert witnesses lied. And, equally significant, no one has come up with any witnesses of importance whose statements were not before the Commission either through testimony or through interview reports. This is not to say that the authors of the third stage afford equal credence to the testimony that the Commission accepted, or view the weight of the evidence as did the Commission. Quite

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the contrary. In each of the books, there is a rejection of those witnesses whom the Commission apparently believed, an acceptance of those whom the Commission discounted and the drawing of entirely different conclusions from the same evidence.

Nor is it merely whim that made each of these books accept witnesses and theories that the Commission had rejected. Each author argues essentially that his account is unbiased and therefore completely rational and that the Commission was more interested in "political truth" than in the actual facts of the assassination. The theory is that the most politically settling thing the country could hear was that a lone assassin, unconnected with any power group and completely without political motive, had committed a hopelessly irrational act and had then died at the hands of someone equally irrational. Since that was so, it is argued that no great dishonesty need be imputed to the Commission, but rather only a subconscious straining to find what it wished to find. Indeed, this theme is repeated so often throughout these books that one almost accepts it as an obvious truth. When one thinks about it, however, it is hard to visualize a set of facts about the assassination which if published would afford no consolation to at least one of two such polar men as Earl Warren and J. Edgar Hoover.

Moreover, although it sounds much nicer to say that the Commission need only have acted out its subconscious desires in order to have made the gross errors it is accused of, one would have to distort the facts alleged in all of the books to argue that this would be a possibility. For their main thesis to have any validity at all, all of the books —with the possible exception of Epstein's— must imply that many people, including the Commissioners themselves, had deliberately lied, suppressed evidence, and concealed the truth.

There are, of course, certain problems with the conspiracy-to-suppress-the-truth theory. The fact is that the Commission did relatively little of the work of collecting and analyzing the facts. In common with many other governmental commissions, the Warren Commission was chosen for its balance and reputation for integrity, but even if both of these were in fact a sham, the charges of fraud would be meaningless unless the same were true of the staff —composed primarily of young honor graduates of the nation's leading law schools.

The argument that the Commission subconsciously suppressed the truth has, aside from the flat allegation of motive, two main prongs. The first is that the Commission got off on the wrong track by regarding Lee Harvey Oswald from the beginning of the hearings as the principal—and indeed the only—suspect. Before one can appreciate the justice of this complaint, one should consider the physical evidence that greeted the staff members of the Commission when they began their work. First, the President was killed by a series of shots, at least two of which, from the wounds they caused and the marks on his limousine, appeared to have been fired from above and from the rear, the general location of the upper storeys of the Texas School Book Depository. Secondly, in this Depository a rifle was found that not only contained on it a palm print of Lee Harvey Oswald, an employee of the Depository, but that was traced by handwriting analysis as having been purchased by Oswald under an assumed name several months before. Moreover, a bullet in almost perfect condition (the famous "Exhibit 399") was recovered from the stretcher of Governor Connally, another occupant of the car, shortly after the shootings, and was identified positively as having come from Oswald's rifle; and of the fragments of a bullet (which were recovered from the Presidential limousine), two were conclusively identified as having come from Oswald's rifle while the rest— although not conclusively identified—were consistent with this origin. Even if this were the only evidence against Oswald, it would certainly justify a jury verdict against him. Cases have turned on physical evidence no better than this—for instance, the identification of a typewriter rather than a gun transmuted the testimony of a Whittaker Chambers into a case strong enough to convict Alger Hiss, a far more attractive defendant than Lee Oswald.

But the fact that Oswald's rifle was used

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in the killing is not the only physical evidence connecting Oswald with the crime. His subsequent behavior would be hard to explain to a jury on any other theory. Within forty-five minutes of the killing of the President, a Dallas patrolman, J. D. Tippit, was shot to death, and a few minutes thereafter Lee Oswald was arrested in a moving picture theater nearby. A revolver was found on his person, and, while the barrel was too large to allow conclusive identification of the bullets that killed Tippit, several shells were found at the site of the Tippit killing that were unambiguously identified as having come from this gun. One need not assert that these facts prove Oswald's guilt beyond any possible doubt, or even—as is indisputably true—that any prosecutor having such a hard core of evidence would sleep quite comfortably before the trial. Actually, all that need be said is that this evidence gave the Commission a likely and proper starting point. An investigative body, like a human mind, cannot collect facts endlessly without a working hypothesis to give direction to the investigation and to separate that which is relevant from that which is not. This was far from improper; indeed it would seem that the Commission used the most rational method of inquiry by starting with a working hypothesis that Oswald had a hand in the killing and attempting from there to find out, first, whether this was so; second, whether, if so, there was anyone who aided or conspired with him; and third, whether Jack Ruby had any connection with Oswald or the assassination.

The second prong of the argument, that the truth was unintentionally suppressed by the Commission, is much more complicated. This argument is that the Commission should have treated the inquiry as at least in part a trial of Lee Oswald and afforded him the benefits of the adversary system by appointing a lawyer to cross-examine witnesses and protect his interests. (The Commission did appoint a lawyer to "represent" Oswald but neither this attorney—the then President of the American Bar Association—nor the Commission took the appointment in any way seriously.) It is argued that not only was this unfair to Oswald, but it contributed to the alleged unreliability of the Commission's conclusions. It should be clear, however, that although a criminal trial of Lee Oswald might have been the best method of determining Oswald's guilt, it would have been one of the worst methods of deciding whether Oswald, if guilty, had been part of a conspiracy. For a host of reasons, evidence bearing on the question of a conspiracy would have been ruled inadmissible in such a prosecution, even if the parties felt that they were tactically better off by producing it. Furthermore, it is really quite unlikely that either side would have tried. Oswald certainly would not have made his case better by showing that there was or was not a conspiracy, and while the government perhaps might have been marginally benefited by showing there was a conspiracy if it had had such evidence, the chances of confusing the jury and leading them away from the basic issue—Oswald's guilt —might very well have made such a course inadvisable to any confident prosecutor.

The lack of counsel for Oswald on the issue of his own guilt is another point entirely. Here, I part company with the Commission and think that a competent, honest and dedicated staff working solely to show that Oswald was innocent would have improved the reliability of the Commission's determination. On the other hand, it was hardly outrageous of the Commission to place the burden both of looking for exculpatory evidence and of cross-examining witnesses on its whole staff—which did in fact reveal the unreliability of a great deal of evidence that might otherwise have been adduced against Oswald. Had Oswald been alive, he, presumably knowing the facts, would have been most competent to advise his counsel how to proceed. But since Oswald was dead by the time the Commission was called into being, his lawyer would have been put in the position of the famous advocate who is reputed to have defended a rape case by arguing first that the man never did it, and second that the girl consented. The facts brought before the Warren Commission might support arguments, albeit very weak ones, that Oswald did not commit the crime, for, say, eight mutually

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exclusive reasons. Presumably, only Oswald would have known whether any of these reasons was the true one—and hence probably the one most likely of success—but any counsel who had tried seriously to put forth all of the inconsistent defenses would only have succeeded in burying any valid ones beneath many that turned out to be spurious. Moreover, any lawyer for Oswald would, after the fact, have been open to the charge, "Why didn't you show thus and so?" The answer, of course, might have been "Because if I did, my witness could have been destroyed completely," or "thus and so was obviously not true." These perhaps might be good answers, but coming from the Commission's defenders they would not prove sufficient and it is unlikely that they would prove more so if they came from any "defense" lawyer. The fact is that the death of Oswald made the work of the Commission vastly more difficult. If Oswald had been alive his failure to point out any possible theories of innocence would be taken as an admission that there were no valid ones and his refusal to testify or provide any evidence—the highly artificial command of the Fifth Amendment notwithstanding—would be taken as an effort to cover up guilt. With Oswald dead, however, the Commission was left to refute every possible argument that Oswald might have made—an almost endless task.

Although the five books of the third stage rely in part on general criticisms of the Commission to make plausible their different weighing of the facts, it is on their discussions of specific items of evidence that they must stand or fall.

Epstein's book, for this reason, is the best with which to begin. Its exposition of the facts is the shortest; it is the clearest and least polemical; finally, it hits at what is probably the most difficult to justify of the Commission's major conclusions. Epstein does not deny that Oswald took part in the assassination of President Kennedy. The thrust of his work is that the Commission, in concluding that there was no reason to believe that Oswald had had assistance, had accepted a hypothesis that on its own evidence was a most unlikely one and rejected persuasive evidence that Oswald must have had aid in firing at President Kennedy.

Although the evidence against Oswald was ample, the Commission was, of course, most interested in determining whether he was acting in concert with others. While this task was central to the Commission's role, a little thought reveals just how difficult was the problem that the Commission faced. If the Commission could find enough evidence of a conspiracy, it could then prove—or at least assert with confidence—that one existed. On the other hand, if it could find no evidence of one, what did that prove? How could one ever prove that Oswald had not been part of a conspiracy? It was always possible that somebody had telephoned the night before and encouraged him; someone might have been waiting farther along the President's route prepared to fire if Oswald missed; and it is even possible that Oswald fired after—or even at the same time as—another attempt, which failed so completely that it did not even cause a disturbance. Certainly, the failure of the Commission to find evidence of any of these things was only very weak proof that they did not happen. Indeed, the nature of the situation was such that a reasonable possibility that Oswald had had help would have to remain, regardless of how careful and competent was the investigation, which found no evidence of a conspiracy.

On the other hand, one thing the Commission might be able to do was to prove whether it was possible for Oswald to have fired the shots himself. For this reason it became imperative to examine more closely the sequence of shots that struck the President and Governor Connally. In this task, the Commission was aided enormously by moving picture photographs taken by a clothing manufacturer named Abraham Zapruder. In determining the timing of the fatal volley the Commission began with the likelihood—not disputed by Epstein—that there were three shots. The Commission reasoned that, inasmuch as Oswald's view of the President would have been blocked between Frames 166 and 210 on Zapruder's film by the foliage from a large tree, the first shot must have been fired either before Frame 166 or after Frame 210. The elimi-

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nation of the period before Frame 166 was fairly simple. If the President had been shot from Oswald's vantage before Frame 166, his entrance wound would have been in the front rather than the rear. Moreover, the President reacted to the wound around Frame 225, and his reaction time would have been inordinately slow—over three seconds—had he been struck at Frame 166. The photographs not only fixed the President's first wound at somewhere between Frames 210 and 225 (because Zapruder's view was blocked briefly by a sign, the President disappeared from the film at Frame 205 and did not reappear until Frame 225—at which time he seemed to have been hit), they also showed that by Frame 235 Governor Connally had also been hit and that at Frame 313 the fatal bullet struck the President's head.

While one might, at first, think that the first shot hit the President in the neck, the second hit Governor Connally, and the third struck the President's head, another fact made this reconstruction impossible. It was demonstrated that Oswald's rifle could not physically be reloaded and fired in less than 2.3 seconds, or, in terms of Zapruder's film speed of 18.3 frames per second, 42 frames. As a result, even if the President had been hit at Frame 210—the earliest point at which Oswald had had a clear shot—it would have been impossible for another bullet from Oswald's gun to have hit Governor Connally at Frame 235. The Commission therefore adopted what has since become known as the "one-bullet" theory and concluded that the same bullet first passed through the President's neck and then struck Governor Connally. Moreover, since one bullet was fragmented when it struck the President's head and there was no sign of any other bullet mark on the limousine, the Commission concluded that one of the shots (most likely the second) must have missed the Presidential car completely. With these two bullets therefore accounted for, Exhibit 399 (the bullet found on Governor Connally's stretcher) had to be the "one bullet" that had struck both President Kennedy and Governor Connally. To reach this conclusion, the Commission had to answer three major questions: first, is the one-bullet theory refuted by Governor Connally's testimony that he heard the first shot and had time to turn around before being hit by what he was certain must have been the second shot; secondly, could one bullet have inflicted the wound on President Kennedy's neck and the wounds found on Governor Connally—in his rib cage(front and back), his wrist and his thigh; and finally, if one bullet could have done all this damage, could it have remained in the almost perfect condition of Exhibit 399?

The Commission felt that it had satisfactorily answered each of these questions. Governor Connally's testimony could be explained by the fact that often there is a perceptible lag (here the lag would have had to be on the order of one-half of a second) between the time one is struck by a bullet and the time one realizes this. And although the photographic evidence did not show any obvious reaction by the Governor immediately after he was presumably hit, this too could be explained by a delayed reaction. As to the other two questions, the Commission felt that the physical evidence and the expert testimony before it fully supported its conclusion.

It is in this context that Epstein's argument can be understood. First, he argues that unless the Commission's one-bullet theory was correct, there would have to have been another assassin, since Oswald himself clearly could not have fired two shots so close together as the ones that struck President Kennedy and Governor Connally.

Actually, of course, this is but one possibility; another and perhaps a more likely one would have been that Oswald indeed had fired his first shot before Frame 210 while the foliage obscured his view (it was possible to see, although not well, through that foliage). This would then account for Governor Connally's statement that he heard the first shot before he was hit. In that case, the bullet that was Exhibit 399 might be either the first bullet that struck President Kennedy (and then somehow did no further damage either to itself or to the car) or the second bullet that wounded Governor Connally. Al-

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though for various reasons each of these possibilities is unlikely, neither seems more so than Epstein's alternative.

Despite his having leaped to the most sensational of the conclusions that follow from his own arguments, Epstein's attack upon the one-bullet theory deserves careful attention. It has two independent parts, either of which, if accepted, would be enough to demolish that theory. The first, and by far the most discussed, involves the nature of the wounds on President Kennedy's body. According to the Commission, the first bullet to strike the President hit him in the back of the neck-shoulder area and continued in a downward path, exiting from his neck below the Adam's apple and then continuing downward, striking Governor Connally who was sitting in the jump seat ahead of the President. This conclusion, however, had not been obvious at the beginning. The doctors at Parkland Hospital where the President was first brought noticed a wound on his throat below the necktie line. They were concerned solely with prolonging the President's life, and, since they did not turn him over, they failed to note the wound in the back of his neck-shoulder area. As a result, they concluded that the visible wound "might be" an entrance wound. They then cut through this wound as part of a tracheotomy, obscuring it completely. Later, when the body was flown to Washington for autopsy, the autopsy surgeons noted what they thought was clearly an entrance wound in the back neck-shoulder area. They could find no exit wound, however, and it was only when, the next morning, they talked to the doctors who had treated the President at Parkland Hospital in Dallas that the autopsy surgeons found out about the obscured wound in the front of the President's neck. Then it all became clear to them. The wound in the back, a bruise they had noted on the lung where it extends into the neck, and the obscured wound were all on a straight line extending slightly downward. From this they concluded that a bullet had been fired from above and had passed downward through the President's neck and out at an angle that, the Commission concluded, would have enabled it to strike Governor Connally in the rib cage, wrist and thigh—all of these wounds being located on a straight line.

Epstein's argument with reference to the President's wounds is basically a twofold attack on this reconstruction. He argues, first, that the bullet that struck the President did not go through his body, and, secondly, that the wound on the President's back was located much too low for the bullet to have described the path ascribed to it by the Commission. In support of his first attack, Epstein cites an F.B.I. report made at the time of the autopsy that stated, "There was no point of exit and the bullet was not in the body." A supplementary F.B.I. report dated January 13th stated, "Medical examination of the President's body had revealed that the bullet which entered his back had penetrated to a distance of less than a finger length."

Certainly, if this were true, it would demolish the one-bullet theory. Epstein states:

> Clearly the FBI summary and supplemental reports and the Warren Report give diametrically opposed findings regarding the President's autopsy. This presents a dilemma; on the one hand if the FBI reports distorted such a basic fact of the assassination, doubt is cast upon the FBI's entire investigation. . .

Actually, this is far from clear. The fact is that there are many errors in the F.B.I. reports, as, for that matter, there would be in any large-scale investigation by any agency. To agree that an agency is not infallible—which the F.B.I. most certainly is not—is something less than to "cast doubt" upon its entire investigation. The explanation that several of the Commission staff members have given is that an F.B.I. agent left before the autopsy was complete and telephoned in his report while the doctors were unable to determine the bullet's path through the President's body. (Actually, even this explanation is not necessary—until they spoke to the Parkland Hospital doctors the next morning, the autopsy surgeons did think the bullet had not passed through the President's neck.) Nor is the fact that this statement was not corrected in the supplemental report, even though

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the F.B.I. had the autopsy report by that time, grounds to imply, as Mr. Epstein does, that the infallible F.B.I. was sticking to its guns despite a false autopsy report. First of all, anyone who has dealt with a government agency knows (and I, personally, have seen it in F.B.I. reports) how information from a previous letter or report gets included in subsequent documents long after having been shown to be wrong. Furthermore, even Epstein's theory involves fallibility on the part of the F.B.I. since the proper course would have been to discuss and point out the error in the autopsy report. Finally, the assumption that the F.B.I. does and did make errors does not, as does Mr. Epstein's theory, involve perjury on the part of at least the three autopsy surgeons (one of whom, Colonel Finck, did the one-bullet theory considerable damage in an entirely different connection). Not only did these doctors have no reason to lie, but, more significant perhaps, they could have then had no possible way to know of the evidence disclosed by the Zapruder films and hence no possible knowledge that their testimony and report would prove so crucial.

The second of Epstein's points on the President's neck wounds is that the downward course of the bullet as determined by the autopsy surgeons was impossible because the bullet wound in the President's back was lower than that in his throat. If this were true, it would mean that the bullet could not have struck Governor Connally so as to cause his wounds, which clearly were made by a bullet following a downward path (the Commission calculated the angle at around eighteen degrees). Again, Epstein's case is based primarily on the reports of the investigatory agencies rather than upon those of the autopsy surgeons. Thus the Secret Service and F.B.I. reports, respectively, state that the wound was in Kennedy's "back, about six inches below the neckline," and "about four inches down from the right shoulder." Moreover, and Epstein regards this as crucial, the F.B.I. reports show that the hole in the back of the President's jacket was five and three-eighths inches below the top of the collar and that the bullet hole in the back of his shirt was five and three-quarters inches below the top of the collar. From this, Epstein concludes that the actual location of the wound was "obviously inconsistent with the position of the entrance wound" according to the Commission. At first glance, anyone not familiar with anatomy would think this was so. It just so happens, however, that in humans the front of the neck extends considerably lower than the back of the neck—an anatomical fact which the reader is strongly urged to verify. In fact, if one raises one's right arm slightly, as if to wave at a crowd, as the President was doing, one can discover that a point five and three-quarters inches below the top of the collar is slightly above a point on the neck just below the Adam's apple—where the exit wound was. If one has an exceptionally powerful shoulder development, as did President Kennedy, and allows for about an inch of "riding up" by the shirt and jacket, as one would expect on one who wears a brace, it is not unreasonable to assume the wound would be approximately two inches higher, which would account for the seventeen and two-thirds degree downward movement that the autopsy surgeons found. Interestingly enough, the autopsy surgeons located the point at which the wound was—"fourteen centimeters below the top of the right mastoid process"—a place (depending on the length of the President's neck) approximately two inches higher than the position of Kennedy's exit wound. It is hard to decide which is more astounding—the fact that Epstein could have written the book without bothering to measure or the fact that this elementary point slipped by his reviewers.

The second major prong of Epstein's assault upon the one-bullet theory concerns, not the President's wounds, but rather the condition of the putative bullet. Not only is this argument more difficult to answer than the first, but the unsoundness of Epstein's arguments on the President's wounds has perhaps deprived this issue of the full attention it deserves. Epstein's argument here is simply that the "one bullet," Exhibit 399, is in too good condition to have done all of the damage to Governor

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Connally's rib cage, his wrist and his thigh. Indeed, Colonel Finck, the only witness to be asked specifically whether Exhibit 399 could have caused Connally's wrist wound, answered, "No, for the reason that there are too many bullet fragments described in the wrist." Nonetheless, although the Commission's investigation would certainly have been more satisfactory if it had probed further into this testimony, there are reasons to believe that Exhibit 399 could have done just the damage that the Colonel denied.

First of all, Colonel Finck had not seen Governor Connally's wounds and the description that he relied upon makes it quite clear that the fragments found in Governor Connally's wrist were minute. (Another witness, Dr. Gregory, who did actually treat Governor Connally's wrist, testified that the missile that struck Governor Connally's wrist "could be virtually intact, insofar as mass was concerned.")

Second, the bullet that first struck Governor Connally in the back of the rib cage made a most unusual wound. As one of Connally's physicians described it:

> The wound entrance was an elliptical wound. In other words, it had a long diameter and a short diameter. It did not have the appearance of a wound caused by a high velocity bullet that had not struck anything else.

This kind of wound is typical of that made by a bullet that has already hit another object and is tumbling.

Third, there was expert testimony that had a bullet struck Governor Connally's wrist without having gone through other objects, it would have done far more damage than it did.

Fourth, Exhibit 399 was damaged only on the very rear end, as though it had hit bone rear end first—a condition of course consistent with the tumbling behavior of the bullet that struck Governor Connally. The refusal, then, to accept the one-bullet theory would have forced the Commission to explain what the bullet that struck Governor Connally had struck first to set it tumbling; what, other than Governor Connally's rib and wrist, Exhibit 399 could have struck rear end first; and finally what happened to the bullet that exited from the President's neck still moving fast enough to damage both itself and anything that it struck.

The conclusion is by no means an obvious one, especially since the crucial testimony—that of Governor Connally's doctors—contains many inconsistencies, some of which point away from the one-bullet theory. On the other hand, when, in addition to raising all these questions, the most significant of the theories alternative to the one-bullet theory presupposed a second assassin firing from the same area as Lee Harvey Oswald but who, unlike Oswald, left no trace at all, it was hardly unreasonable for the Commission to decide that the probabilities favored the one-bullet theory.

Although, of the two major substantive points in Epstein's book, the first is almost certainly wrong and the second quite dubious, Epstein spends most of his effort on what seems a useful and probably is a reasonably accurate description of the Warren Commission's procedures. Epstein's own treatment of the substantive issues, as well as the fact that many members of the Commission's staff have charged him with flagrant misquotation, forces one to withhold judgment on what might be the more significant aspect of Epstein's work.

One need not, however, withhold judgment on the most interesting—and certainly the most publicized and profitable—of the revisionist works, Mark Lane's *Rush to Judgment*. It is a wide-ranging attack on almost every conclusion of the Warren Commission, and at least initially leaves the reader thinking that if only a tenth of Lane's assertions are true, he has more than made his case that the Warren Commission's performance is a major national disgrace. The problem is that if the reader (as, of course, few readers do) begins to check the assertions in *Rush to Judgment* against the evidence, he will find in many instances that he has been expertly gulled. In short, nowhere near a tenth of Lane's relevant assertions and implications stand up to careful scrutiny.

Not that the book is an easy one to demolish. The enormous range of his attacks

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on the Commission has allowed Mr. Lane to profit not only by the reluctance of book reviewers to dig deeply into the evidence, but also, perhaps, by the decision of some periodicals not to give the book the respectability that would come of discussing it in detail. Moreover, a major factor that makes Lane's book especially difficult to review is that he presents no coherent theory as to the Presidential assassination. Rather he presents a long string of weakly connected points without any one crucial point at which his theory can be destroyed. Proving his points insubstantial, therefore, is almost an endless task and the complete demolishing of one point still leaves people —as, I regret to say, it will leave many readers of this piece—demanding why this or that point has not been refuted.

Lane's technique can best be appreciated by examining his effort to prove that the shots fired at the Presidential limousine came not from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository where Oswald's rifle was found, but from a grassy knoll in front of and to the right of the Presidential car. Essentially, his argument makes two points: one, that the noise of shots appeared to come from the area of the knoll rather than from the Book Depository, and second, that a puff of smoke was seen rising from the area of the knoll at about the time the President was shot. Indeed, he is able to make his case with a certain amount of persuasiveness—but only at the cost of completely distorting the evidence. On the issue of where the noise came from, Lane convinces us that many (but by no means the preponderance, he would imply) of those at the site of the assassination thought that the shots came from near the grassy knoll. Lane does not, however, bother setting out the highly relevant testimony of a railroad worker named Lee Bowers, Jr., although he relies on that witness for other points. Bowers testified that because of an echo in the area it was almost impossible to tell whether a noise came from the overpass near the grassy knoll or from the Depository building. Bowers had noted this before the assassination when the workers near the knoll could not tell whether noises originating in some work being done on the Depository building came from that building or from the overpass nearby. Moreover, although there were certainly many witnesses who thought that the shots came from the grassy knoll area, Lane is not content merely with them. He quotes his own interview with witness James L. Simmons in which Simmons says that the sound of shots came from "the left and in front of us toward the wooden fence," without mentioning the fact that some eighteen months earlier Simmons had testified before the Warren Commission that he had the impression the shots came from the Book Depository.

Lane's argument as to the smoke over the knoll is equally interesting. Actually, there was no dispute about this; there was a puff above the knoll—one witness described it as "of smoke or steam," another said it was "vapor eight feet above the ground." The Commission made no attempt to deny this. Lane's sleight of hand is to concentrate on the presence of the smoke and take as obvious the assumption that the puff came from a gun fired at the President. Thus he quotes witness Clemon E. Johnson as saying that he saw white smoke but does not go further to note Johnson's statement that he "felt that this smoke came from a motorcycle abandoned near the spot by a Dallas policeman." Moreover, unless the assassin fired a sixteenth-century arquebus it is hard to see how a shot fired at the President could have made as much smoke as Lane convinces us was visible. Then too, the area was teeming with people; and although it is conceivable that a man with a rifle might not have been seen, not only was this most unlikely but—perhaps more significantly—it was so dangerous that it is hard to believe any assassin with even minimum rationality would choose such a spot. Finally, and of course most important, the physical evidence indicates beyond any reasonable doubt that the two shots that struck those in the Presidential limousine were fired from the rear and from above and that there is no physical trace of any other would-be assassin.

The question of the smoke over the grassy knoll indicates another of Lane's

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techniques. He has excoriated the Commission both in his book and in innumerable public appearances for not calling witnesses who could have testified that a puff of smoke was seen over the grassy knoll. The implication is, first, that in this matter the Commission did at best a slovenly job in not calling those witnesses, (whose statements to the F.B.I. were before the Commission) and, second, that this testimony would (or could) have changed the Commission's conclusions. The obvious untruth of the second implication shows why the first is also false.

But going through Lane's book piece by piece is so time- and space-consuming that, after this brief taste of his technique, it is more appropriate merely to classify his methods of distortion.

First, there is the rank distortion of a witness's testimony. Thus, to bolster his argument that the shots came from the grassy knoll area, Lane discusses the testimony of Lee Bowers:

He told Commission counsel that "something occurred in this particular spot which was out of the ordinary, which attracted my eye for some reason, which I could not identify."
Q. "You couldn't describe it?"
Bowers: "Nothing that I could pinpoint as having happened that—"

Before Bowers could conclude this most important sentence, the Commission lawyer interrupted with an unrelated question. A little later Bowers was excused as a witness, leaving unexplained what it was in the area behind the fence that caught his eye at the moment the President was shot.

In a subsequent interview with me which was filmed and tape-recorded, however, Bowers offered more detailed information on this important point.

Bowers: At the time of the shooting, in the vicinity of where the two men I have described were, there was a flash of light or, as far as I am concerned, something I could not identify, but there was something which occurred which caught my eye in this immediate area on the embankment. Now, what this was, I could not state at that time and at this time I could not identify it, other than there was some unusual occurrence—a flash of light or smoke or something which caused me to feel like something out of the ordinary had occurred there.

Lane: In reading your testimony, Mr. Bowers, it appears that just as you were about to make that statement, you were interrupted in the middle of the sentence by the Commission counsel, who then went into another area.
Bowers: Well, that's correct. I mean, I was simply trying to answer his questions, and he seemed to be satisfied with the answer to that one and did not care for me to elaborate.

Lane's implication that the counsel for the Commission wished to avoid this revelation is typical of his approach. The dialogue just before the testimony which Lane quotes, however, casts a certain light upon what actually happened before the Commission.

Mr. Ball: "When you said there was a commotion, what do you mean by that? What did it look like to you when you were looking at the commotion?"
Bowers: "I am just unable to describe rather than it was something out of the ordinary, a sort of milling around, but something occurred in this particular spot which was out of the ordinary, which attracted my eye for some reason, which I could not identify."

Moreover, eight questions earlier, the question and answer went as follows:

Ball: "Did you see any activity in this high ground above Elm after the shot?"
Bowers: "At the time of the shooting there seemed to be some commotion, and immediately following there was a motorcycle policeman who shot nearly all of the way to the top of the incline."

Finally, Lane does not set out the very end of Bowers' testimony—which hardly supports his view that the Commission was trying to hide something.

Ball: "Is there anything that you told me that I haven't asked you about you can think of?"
Bowers: "Nothing that I recall."
Ball: "You have told me all that you know about this, haven't you?"
Bowers: "Yes, I believe that I have related everything which I have told the city police, and also told to the F.B.I."

The second technique Lane uses is the careful and factual presentation of one side of a case without indicating, in any way, that powerful reasons exist for reject-

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ing the conclusion to which this side might point. Probably the best example of this technique is his discussion of the palm print on Oswald's rifle.

When Oswald's rifle was first sent from Dallas to the F.B.I. for examination, it contained a number of notations as to possible fingerprints—none of which could positively be identified as Oswald's. Some days later, when Oswald's death had mooted Texas' case against him, all of the miscellaneous evidence against him not previously sent for examination was forwarded to the F.B.I. Then it was discovered that included in this batch, among the miscellaneous documents and pictures, was a piece of scotch tape with a notation that on it was a palm print lifted from the rifle. This palm print turned out to be the only print on the weapon positively identifiable as Oswald's. The Dallas police officer, J. C. Day, who lifted the print stated that he had not bothered noting this when the rifle was first sent to Washington because he thought that enough of the lifted print was still identifiable on the weapon—an assertion which Lane calls "incredible" in view of the fact that the F.B.I. expert testified that no such print remained. With this evidence and the statement by Dallas Police Chief Curry that

> If we can put his prints on the rifle, why, it'll certainly connect him with the rifle, and if we can establish that this is the rifle that killed the President, why. . .

Lane has a field day. Indeed he makes a very persuasive case for the proposition that the "lifted" print was an afterthought by the Dallas police after the rifle had been sent to Washington, and that Oswald's prints had never been on the gun at all. Unfortunately, Lane does not choose to mention the only remaining piece of evidence on the issue. In response to a request from the Commission, the F.B.I. fingerprint expert reexamined the lifted palm print and was able to determine that the interruptions in the print caused by the nicks and scratches in the surface of the material from which the print had been lifted exactly matched the nicks and scratches in Oswald's gun—thus proving beyond question that Oswald's palm print had indeed been lifted from the rifle.

Lane's use of this technique does not always rise even to the level of one-sided truth. Thus, to make his case that the bullet that struck the President's neck was fired from the front, not from the rear, Lane not only relies heavily upon the original impression of the doctors at Parkland Hospital, but he badly distorts their views as well. Lane quotes out of context to make it appear that they thought the wound was an entrance wound because of something in its appearance rather than merely because it was the only wound they saw. Far more important than this, however, is Lane's failure to mention what is probably the crucial and irrefutable evidence on the issue of which direction the shots came from—the President's clothing. Lane does not bother telling us that the fibers around the bullet hole both in the back of the President's jacket and in the back of his shirt were pointed inward, while the fibers on the front of his collar were pushed outward.

Lane's third basic technique is to set himself up as his own expert witness—although not of course under oath. He states that a picture taken at the time of the assassination shows Jack Ruby in the crowd, not in the offices of the Dallas *Morning News,* where the Commission placed him. To this type of assertion one can only say that as close an examination of the picture as I could make did not reveal to me that this was Jack Ruby (indeed, I would say quite the contrary) and I am certain that I am as familiar with Jack Ruby's picture as is Mr. Lane. Lane, however, is not satisfied with accusing the Commission of ignoring Ruby's presence; he has built upon his identification to accuse the Commission of cropping the picture for the purpose of hiding the refutation of its own version. In fact, as pointed out by Wesley Liebeler, a professor at the U.C.L.A. Law School and probably the Commission's most articulate defender, all that happened was that the edge of the picture was removed because the Commission was using it solely to show the action at its center and because the edge

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showing "Ruby" was under the cardboard holder of the thirty-five millimeter slide. Moreover, as Liebeler points out, in deciding whether the Commission was trying to suppress this evidence, it is relevant to consider that one can get the slide in question, plus several others, by sending about two dollars to Phil Willis Enterprises, Post Office Box 17266, Dallas.

The technique of acting as one's own expert witness can be combined with the previously mentioned technique of leaving out crucial evidence, as Lane does when he insists that the famous picture of Oswald carrying a rifle (Exhibit 133(a)) is a composite of which only the head was Oswald's. Lane says he is led to this conclusion by his own observations of the shadows on the face and on the body. The reader can examine the picture for himself, but it does appear to me that the picture was a composite. Of course, on this issue, I would rely neither on my own nor on Lane's observations. There is relevant expert testimony, which Lane does not mention. An F.B.I. photographic expert testified before the Commission that his microscopic examination of the picture convinced him that it was not a composite. Moreover, although the negative of the photograph Lane attacks was not discovered, the police found among Oswald's belongings the negative of another picture (Exhibit 133(b)) which also showed Oswald holding a rifle. An examination of this picture indicates that it was taken at the same time as its more famous companion (Oswald is wearing the same clothing and his hair is combed in exactly the same way in both photographs) and as to this picture the evidence is overwhelming. The photographic expert testified that an examination of this negative and of Oswald's camera (which was also in evidence) showed not only that the negative was not a composite but that it had been taken with Oswald's own camera.

The fourth of Lane's basic techniques involves the gross logical fallacy. Thus, he argues at some length that Lee Oswald was not a good enough shot to have assassinated the President in the way the Commission stated that he did, and therefore by implication that Oswald could not have been the assassin. At first glance the logical connection between the propositions seems apparent but a little thought reveals that ability to perform a task means two entirely different things. First, one's inability to lift, without aid, a ten thousand pound weight or run a mile in three minutes is such that, regardless of any other evidence, we could conclude that such a thing just could not have happened. When we say, however, that someone is not a good enough shot to hit a given target two out of three times, we are speaking of an entirely different kind of inability. What we mean, of course, is that one is not good enough to do this consistently, and although the chance of one's having made a particular shot becomes less and less as the shot becomes more difficult, or as one's marksmanship ability decreases, it is always possible for one to have made a lucky shot or two. Thus, the fallacy in Lane's argument is in asking whether Oswald was a good enough shot to have hit the moving targets twice in a given time, at a given distance, instead of asking whether the unlikelihood of Oswald's making those shots is enough to shake our conviction that he in fact did so. This of course depends upon the strength of the other evidence that Oswald was the killer—an inquiry which Lane nowhere mentions in this context. In fact, if one estimates the probabilities involved, I would have to say that if the question were asked in advance, the odds of Oswald's making the necessary shots were about one in fifty (although who can say to what extent it concentrates the mind to have the President of the United States in one's telescopic sights). On the other hand, I would have to say that the other evidence, not counting that of Oswald's marksmanship, would lead to the odds of about one thousand to one that Oswald had been the assassin, after all. It may sound paradoxical, but a little thought reveals that the very best evidence that Oswald was able to make the shots is the mass of evidence that he in fact did so.

Number five among Lane's techniques—one which we have already alluded to—is to set up straw men, and attack the Com-

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mission on points where he does not even disagree with its conclusions. We have seen one variation earlier where Lane denounced the Commission for not calling further witnesses who had seen smoke above the knoll. Another variant of this is to quote a statement from the Commission's report and to demolish it completely —never pointing out that his quotation is so slanted as not to have represented the Commission's view in the first place. Thus Lane quotes the Commission as saying,

> Jesse Curry, Chief of the Dallas Police Department testified that no more than 25 to 50 of Dallas's almost 1200 policemen were acquainted with Ruby.

Then he goes on to show that Curry—and of course inferentially the Commission—had grossly underestimated the extent of Ruby's acquaintanceship with policemen and that Ruby in fact knew closer to five hundred policemen than fifty. Lane's demonstration is indeed correct, but if one reads what the Commission originally had to say on the issue his point becomes somewhat less compelling. Immediately after the sentence Lane quoted, the Commission adds,

> However, the reports of present and past members of the Dallas Police Department as well as Ruby's employees and acquaintances indicate that Ruby's police friendships were far more widespread than those of the average citizen.

Obviously the Commission saw no need to demonstrate the gross underestimation of the Dallas Police Chief, and contented itself with a broad hint.

The remarkable thing about *Rush to Judgment* is that we have hardly scratched the surface in numbering and classifying Lane's distortions. There are more and more and more.

More recently, Lane has defended himself on the grounds that "My book is not an objective analysis," but more like a brief for Oswald. First of all, this defense comes only after Lane has been backed into a corner. Nothing in the book or in its publicity indicates to the uninformed reader that Lane is anything but objective —outraged, perhaps, by the dishonesty and deceit he finds all around him, but nonetheless, objective. Furthermore, the idea that *Rush to Judgment* might merely be a brief for Oswald completely misconstrues the nature of a brief. True, an advocate has a certain latitude to emphasize some facts and de-emphasize others. But Lane carries this far beyond mere advocacy to the point of extreme misrepresentation and distortion.

We may pass over *Whitewash* by Harold Weisberg, in just a sentence. It is the most strident, bitter and generally irrationally biased of all the attacks on the Commission. Out of charity, we shall mention it no further and move on to Leo Sauvage's *The Oswald Affair.*

Sauvage, the American correspondent of *Le Figaro,* has written an absolutely bewildering book, which in some ways is very different from Lane's and in others quite similar.

As in the case of Lane, the number and variety of Sauvage's objections to the Commission's version (and many of them are very different from Lane's) are so great that it is impossible even to begin to cover them all here. His technique, however, is a fairly simple one. First, in discussing each question, he begins with the initial reports coming out of Dallas in the first hectic moments after the assassination. These were almost always so wrong and garbled that now that a great deal more evidence has been made available, they are sitting ducks. Then he proceeds to discuss the reports and rumors that seeped out with all too great frequency during the Warren Commission investigation. On most occasions these turned out in one way or another to have been inaccurate, too; and where they were not, Sauvage damns them for having been leaked at all. Finally, then, when he comes to the evidence presented by the Commission, Sauvage has the reader psychologically prepared to find that, like everything before it, it too is a tissue of lies.

Sauvage indeed seems convinced that America has another Dreyfus case (an analogy he uses on several occasions) and that Oswald had no hand whatsoever in the assassination. In Sauvage's words, "I

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find nothing to show that Oswald was the assassin of President Kennedy," and, "It is logically untenable, legally indefensible and morally inadmissable to declare Lee Harvey Oswald the assassin . . ."

Unlike Lane, who makes use of a broad range of tactics to attack the Commission, Sauvage concentrates primarily on just one: a refusal to accept the most likely—often even the most overwhelmingly likely—thrust of the evidence because in his opinion it does not amount to a certainty.

Probably the most perverse of all of Sauvage's findings is that, as he has since phrased it, "there is no legally acceptable proof that Oswald had the revolver [ascribed to him] in his possession at the time of his arrest."

Sauvage's reconstruction of the seizure of the revolver (Exhibit 143) from Oswald is almost a virtuoso performance. He correctly points out what he considers to be an error in the testimony of Officer McDonald, the first policeman to approach Oswald in the Texas Theater following the slaying of Officer Tippit. McDonald, who identified Exhibit 143 as the revolver he had taken from Oswald, could, in all probability, not of his own knowledge be sure that it was the same gun, since he had handed it to another officer before his struggle with Oswald had ended.

Sauvage next moves on to the testimony of Officer Carroll, the policeman whom McDonald identified as having received the revolver during the struggle. Carroll, when asked by the Commission who had hold of the pistol at the time he took it, stated:

> I don't know, sir; I just saw the pistol pointing at me and grabbed it and jerked it away from whoever had it, and that's all, and by that time then, the handcuffs were put on Oswald.

Carroll himself did not identify the gun but merely stated that he had given it to Officer Hill. Officer Hill then testified that he kept the gun in his possession until he had time to scratch his name on it and was thus able positively to identify Exhibit 143 as the gun that Carroll gave him.

The flaw Sauvage finds in this testimony that leads him to conclude that

> The testimony of the three policemen directly involved does not support the conclusion that a gun was taken from Oswald at the Texas Theater . . .

is that Carroll said that he did not know who had hold of the pistol and that

> the fact that McDonald stated that he had given the pistol to Carroll is utterly meaningless . . . Though neither of the Commission attorneys saw fit to ask any question to this effect, it is quite obvious that McDonald, fighting with Oswald and swarmed by officers, could not have seen which one took the pistol, if he did give the pistol to someone.

Actually, what is "quite obvious" to Sauvage is not at all clear. McDonald may very well have seen Carroll as he testified he did, even though Carroll did not know that McDonald was holding the other end of the gun.

But this is only the beginning. In addition to the testimony of the officers mentioned by Sauvage, it is interesting to note the testimony of Officer C. T. Walker:

> Belin: "When you saw Oswald's hand by his belt, which hand do you see then?"
> Walker: "He had a hold of the handle of it."
> Belin: "Handle of what?"
> Walker: "The revolver."
> Belin: "Was there a revolver there?"
> Walker: "Yes, there was."

Detective Paul L. Bentley stated:

> Just as I entered the lower floor, I saw Patrolman McDonald fighting with the suspect. I saw the suspect pull a pistol from his shirt, so I went to Patrolman McDonald's aid immediately.

Patrolman Ray Hawkins stated:

> Officer Walker and I ran toward the subject and grabbed him by his left arm. The subject had reached in his belt for a gun and Officer McDonald was holding his right hand with a gun in it. Officer Hutson had entered the row behind the suspect and grabbed him around the neck.

Patrolman T. A. Hutson stated:

> Officer C. T. Walker came up and struggling with the suspect's left hand, and as Officer McDonald struggled with the suspect's right hand, he moved it to his waist and drew a pistol . . .

As if this were not enough, Oswald ad-

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mitted to at least twelve police officers and federal agents that he had possessed a pistol in the theater—each time coupling it with a statement that that was all they had him for. Sauvage handles these statements with the assertion:

> The Commission notes that "Oswald admitted nothing that would damage him, but discussed other matters quite freely." The fact of owning a revolver that the police had said had killed Tippit would certainly tend to damage him. It would seem from the report therefore that Oswald did not admit that.

Mr. Sauvage carries his perversity to extremes in this quotation. Obviously, the reasonable construction of this sentence of the report is that Oswald admitted nothing that he was not completely convinced the authorities could prove. At the time there was no ballistic determination of who shot Officer Tippit, and Oswald obviously believed—and on the evidence one can hardly blame him—that his possession of the pistol could be conclusively established.

Finally, if Exhibit 143 was not the gun that Oswald was seen by all to draw, then where did it come from? It did belong—as Sauvage concedes—to Oswald, having been purchased by him some half a year earlier. Could the gun have been brought into the theater by one of the police officers? If so, what was he doing with the gun that fired the shells found beside Officer Tippit's body—especially at a time when he could not have known that this was so? Nor could a police officer have obtained the revolver from Oswald's room after the arrest since the revolver was initialed immediately after it was taken in the Texas Theater, before the officers even knew who Oswald was. Moreover, if Exhibit 143 was not the gun Oswald drew, what happened to the gun he did draw? It apparently has disappeared completely. Perhaps Sauvage would suggest as the alternative explanation a complicated conspiracy among at least a dozen police officers, none of whom was near the assassination site and none of whom could, by any way we can conceive of, have known in advance where they would find Oswald. Admittedly, in the face of all this, a sufficiently desperate defense attorney, to take the prosecution's time and to try to confuse the jury, might conceivably argue that it had not been proven conclusively that Exhibit 143 was taken from Oswald at the theater. But to say that the evidence "does not support the conclusion" is more than merely farfetched.

Although some of Sauvage's book could have been written by Mark Lane—Sauvage asserts "Lee Harvey Oswald did not have the skill required to commit the assassination"—for the most part their attitudes are quite different. Lane does not mention any evidence that does not lead his reader along his chosen path. Thus Lane does not mention one word about the circumstances of Oswald's arrest—the reader of *Rush to Judgment* might well conclude that Oswald had turned himself in to the police. Sauvage, on the other hand, generally mentions evidence he finds uncomfortable but applies his bewildering logic to minimize its effect or to turn it to his advantage. A fine example of this is Sauvage's treatment of the General Walker incident. The Commission concluded that one of the circumstances strengthening its belief that Oswald had killed President Kennedy was the fact that Oswald was the author of a previous assassination attempt some five months earlier on General Edwin C. Walker. The Commission evidence on this issue was not overly strong, relying in great part on the somewhat unreliable testimony of Marina Oswald. During the investigation a note in Oswald's handwriting turned up that indicated that he had expected to be in some kind of trouble shortly. Marina Oswald explained to the Commission that her husband had left this note behind one night and then appeared later that night and explained that he had just attempted to kill General Walker. Sauvage spends some time demolishing this theory, pointing out that Oswald had not returned home with his rifle and that therefore it would have been necessary for him to stash it somewhere near General Walker's house. (According to Marina's testimony, he had told her he had done just this.) Moreover,

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Sauvage points out that it was "never explained how Oswald got to Walker's house" since he had no car. Of course it was possible, Sauvage admits, that he took a bus. Sauvage asks us to:

> Imagine Oswald with his rifle under his arm marching off to slay the General and planning to return home the same way . . . I doubt very much that Lee Harvey Oswald, before reaching home, white and shaking, could make use of those buses and transfers, walk to and from the bus stops, wait at the bus stops for some time (the buses in Dallas, as elsewhere, do not run frequently at night) and do this all without being noticed by anyone.

Certainly Sauvage does point out a number of unlikely aspects to the story. On the other hand, we do know that among Oswald's possessions were found several photographs of General Walker's home, and since microscopic examination revealed that they were taken with Oswald's camera, we are not completely without hard evidence tying him in some way to General Walker. Moreover, the dates involved may be relevant. The picture of Walker's house was taken on March 9th or 10th, 1963. (This was determined from the progress on a building under construction shown in the background.) On March 12th Oswald bought the money order, under an assumed name, which he mailed in to purchase his rifle; on March 20th the rifle was mailed out to him and on April 10th the attempt on General Walker's life occurred.

Sauvage's technique, however, requires him to make mention of the photographs and he quotes the Commission as saying, "Three photographs found among Oswald's possessions after the assassination were identified by Marina Oswald as photographs of General Walker's house." He concentrates, however, on pointing out an inconsistency he finds between this statement and an earlier statement of the Commission: "Until December 3, 1963, the Walker shooting remained unsolved." Since the pictures were found eleven or twelve days earlier than this date,

> Wasn't it strange that the Federal investigators who examined the pictures failed to identify them when they could have checked with the tourist bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, cab drivers or the Boy Scouts. . . ?

To me, it seems hardly strange at all that in the first eleven days after the assassination no one had identified the pictures of General Walker's house. Presumably, police were working on all facets of Oswald and there was no reason at the very beginning of the investigation to think that those pictures might be significant. Indeed, considering the circumstances, the time lag of eleven days seems rather short.

Subsequently (and here he reveals most clearly his talent for missing the point) Sauvage is willing to assume for the sake of argument that Oswald did attempt to kill General Walker. In that case, however, he would regard this as evidence not that Oswald killed President Kennedy but that he did not. Sauvage states:

> I am ready to admit that Oswald was against Fascists and that he might have been led to undertake some action against a Walker. Would the same reason have led him to kill a Kennedy?

To me the fact, if it were so (and it was admittedly not conclusive), that Oswald had attempted to kill General Walker would be reasonably persuasive evidence. True, in criminal prosecutions, it would probably have been held inadmissible, but the reason for this would be not so much because it is not probative, but rather because it is, in a sense, too probative and therefore prejudicial. The significant thing—and in our society the far more rare thing—shown by the attempt on General Walker's life is not that Oswald was against fascists, but that he was capable of killing a man who had done him no personal wrong. Sauvage, of course, is perfectly correct in stating that the absence of a motive for Oswald to kill the President is some reason to believe that he did not do it. But it seems that the significant thing the attempt to kill Walker would indicate is that, in Oswald, we had a man who could kill from ambush a man who had done him no personal harm and from whose death he could not expect to profit.

One must be very careful not to use up all of one's synonyms for perversity on Mr.

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Sauvage's book lest one run out before coming to Richard Popkin's *The Second Oswald.* Actually *The Second Oswald* is only a thin paperback that has had to be padded with nine appendices to make it as long as it is. It is essentially Popkin's long and widely discussed review of the four previously mentioned books, which first appeared in the *New York Review of Books.*

Popkin, chairman of the department of philosophy at the University of California, San Diego, has grasped one of the great truths that has eluded most of the other critics of the Commission. It is one thing to attack the Commission's conclusion on this or that issue as not being based upon the evidence or as being the less likely of two possibilities. It is entirely different, though, to attempt to work all the evidence one accepts into one coherent theory. Popkin understands the fallacy of agreeing at the same time with Epstein that there probably was an assassin in addition to Oswald behind and above the President; with Sauvage that Oswald had nothing to do with the assassination; and with Lane that the shots were fired not from the Book Depository but from the grassy knoll. Popkin realizes that if one agrees with Epstein that the autopsy doctors misplaced the President's wounds, one should be prepared to offer some explanation why they should do this; that if one agrees with Lane that a bullet struck the President in the front of the throat, one should be prepared to explain what happened both to the bullet and to its exit wound; and that if one agrees with Sauvage that Oswald had nothing to do with the attempt on General Walker's life, one should offer an explanation of why he happened to have in his possession a picture of General Walker's house. The discipline required by having to have a theory rather than merely attacking on a large number of isolated points is that one's points and the evidence one accepts must then be consistent.

Popkin therefore makes the effort and his result is so silly that it is hard to believe that he is serious.

In many ways this is quite unfortunate, because several of Popkin's ideas might well have been made into a theory considerably less unlikely than the one he finally chooses. Essentially, the problem that Popkin tries to explain and that throws his theory off is that several identifications of Oswald were made in testimony before the Commission that could not possibly have been correct, since Oswald was undeniably proved to be elsewhere at the time. If Popkin had decided, as the Commission did, that therefore these witnesses were either unintentionally wrong or lying, he would have had no further trouble. In fact, there is good reason to believe that at least one of the witnesses was lying in an attempt to gain publicity. If one accepts their testimony as true, however, as does Popkin, one has to conclude either that Oswald was in two different places at the same time or that there were two Oswalds. Essentially, Popkin's theory is the latter: that the witnesses who identified Oswald as having been in places where he clearly could not have been were correct in the main and that they had been thrown off by an extremely complicated scheme to set up a false trail.

The crime was then to be committed by both Oswalds with the rifle implicating Lee Oswald left at the assassination scene. The second Oswald, who was a better shot and used a better gun than Lee, then could disappear and when the evidence all came in it would be so confused that it would be impossible to convict the actual Oswald.

Mark Lane in one of his chapters uses a variant of this theory in which Oswald was an innocent patsy. If one does this, however, the incident in the Texas Theater is most difficult to explain. Moreover, framing poor Oswald does seem a great deal of trouble for the conspirators to go to at a time when for all they knew by the time President Kennedy arrived in Dallas, Oswald might have either lost his job or gone to Mexico. And even if they could be certain that Oswald would still be working at the Depository they could not possibly know that he would not have been out in the street or elsewhere with a perfect alibi at the time of the shooting.

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On the other hand, if Oswald was, as Popkin seems to assume, a willing party to the whole false trail, one might point out that in that case the trail would in great part not have been false at all. One might then ask what could have been Oswald's possible object in having the trail lead to himself, especially considering the fact that he would end up being tried before a Texas jury that, having heard about his Marxist past, might well not require a vast amount of evidence to give him the death penalty?

But more basically the problem with Popkin's conspiracy is that no sane or even mildly insane person would have done it the way he has suggested. The scene as Popkin visualizes it has two men shooting with different rifles at the Presidential car. (Early in the book it seems that both are in the Book Depository—later Popkin either forgets this and places one on the grassy knoll or adds, without explanation, a third assassin at that site.) If it turns out —as they have no way of making sure it doesn't—that the identifiable bullet is fired not from Oswald's gun but from the other Oswald's gun, the entire scheme blows up completely. As it is, Popkin argues that Exhibit 399 was planted beside Governor Connally's stretcher—presumably by someone who knew that there would be need for a bullet damaged only on the rear end. One would think that if the second Oswald was able to get out of the Book Depository with his rifle without even being seen, there would be no reason to leave Lee Oswald behind as some kind of a hostage.

If Popkin's conspirators to assassinate President Kennedy from the Texas Book Depository were as clever as he makes them out, they could have had Oswald, who worked there, and his friend, the other marksman, fire their shots, then put their rifles in a previously prepared box full either of high explosives or thermite, touch the thing off with a short fuse and appear in the hallway asking what had happened. Since the murder weapons would then have been completely destroyed and there would have been no eyewitnesses, there would have been nothing against either man. Oswald could have said that he decided the best place to watch the parade was from a nearby window and that he had asked his friend, the marksman, to visit with him.

True, there are many ways one can suggest in which the crime, as reconstructed by the Commission, could have been better planned. Obviously, Oswald did not plan it well himself, and one would think that if he had help, that help was much more lucky than skillful. On the other hand, it is one thing to say that it was not well-planned and it is a very different thing to say, as Mr. Popkin does, that it was planned without even the minimum elements of rationality.

The aforementioned five books, their publicity releases, and the public appearances of their authors constitute the great bulk of the third stage of inquiry into the assassination. The "mysterious death" issue, however, brought up after their publication (*Rush to Judgment* mentions it but gives it relatively little attention), probably has to be accounted a legitimate portion of this stage, too. A number of magazines, the most publicized of which is *Ramparts,* have published stories commenting on and drawing the most sinister implications from the "mysterious" deaths of "witnesses" somehow connected with the assassination. Although this facet of the inquiry (like the curse of Tutankhamen of a few decades ago) has received a great deal of comment, even the most cursory examination of the stories shows how essentially foolish they are. First of all, a good many of the deaths hardly seem mysterious in that they were caused by auto accidents, heart attacks and other phenomena that afflict our everyday population. Moreover, before we can tell whether even the number of these deaths is in any way unusual, we would have to know the number of equally mysterious deaths that occurred to people completely unconnected with the Warren Commission *Report.* But even apart from any statistical refutation, the theory that a set of conspirators is now devoted to wiping out a host of unimportant witnesses is almost too silly to be put forth.

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There is not the slightest indication that most of the "victims" have had anything to tell that they had not already told, and indeed the deaths seem concentrated among those who bore only the most peripheral relation to the assassination. When one stops to consider that almost each one of the "mysterious" deaths—presumably to cover up something the victim knows—requires the recruitment of at least one and often several new conspirators, it would seem that, like the pyramid club, the conspiracy would be getting bigger and bigger rather than smaller. One would think that seeing what had happened to those who knew too much, it would get very difficult to recruit new members into the conspiracy. Most important, however, it is hard to say why the supposed killers are taking whatever chances these murders entail when it is so obvious that, whoever the conspirators are, they have already gotten off scot-free.

In all probability, however, the biggest question raised by the third stage of inquiry into the assassination has nothing whatsoever to do with any of the points that have been discussed here. Rather the question is, considering their quality, why have the third-stage writings attracted the attention that they so clearly have?

To my mind it is only a partial answer to rely on the dictum of P. T. Barnum. As I see it, there are four more basic reasons. First, there really are doubts concerning the assassination of the President. This should hardly be surprising since even in a typical criminal case one cannot determine the guilt of a defendant beyond all possible doubt—this is why the jury is instructed that it need only be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt. But in the Warren Commission investigation there are other problems. Even if one concedes that Oswald was guilty beyond any reasonable doubt, there still remains a host of subsidiary questions as to just how he committed the crime and whether he had help. In the typical criminal trial these questions, of course, would often not be answered beyond a reasonable doubt. The jury might well be completely undecided as to which of three or four different means the defendant employed, and yet perfectly rationally believe that, nonetheless, he had employed one of them to commit the crime.

Uncertainty about many issues is an inevitable by-product of any large-scale investigation, and, of course, where the issue is important, there will be disputes. The evidence for the one-bullet theory is ambiguous, and, as often happens when that is true, some people assert one possibility with fervor while others disagree with equal vigor. In all probability we will never know, not only for sure, but even with a very high degree of confidence, whether the one-bullet theory is correct. If this thought is upsetting in the abstract, it is all the more so when one realizes that a completely competent investigation immediately after the assassination (and before the Warren Commission had come into being) might have given us the answer. Unfortunately, however, no one even realized that the issue was raised until after both the Zapruder films and Oswald's gun had been closely examined. By that time the autopsy on President Kennedy had been finished and his body was permanently out of the hands of the surgeons; Governor Connally's wounds were well on the way to healing; and, through an incredible bungle, the Governor's clothes had been cleaned, thus destroying any light they might have shed on the mystery.

The second reason for the great furor caused by the third-stage writings is the fact that, although the Warren Commission investigation seems on the whole a competent one, the actual *Report* of the Commission shows two grave defects. First, it was obviously rushed out. Epstein gives a most plausible explanation why, and although we can understand the Commissioners' desire to get the *Report* published before the 1964 elections, their failure to have taken the necessary time shows up again and again in the quality of the *Report*. Thus, the index to the twenty-six volumes and the citation of exhibits in the *Report* are extremely inaccurate and incomplete (making all the more valuable the comprehensive index compiled by Sylvia Meagher—and published by the

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Scarecrow Press—which has become the standard work for all investigations into the Commission documents), and there is a good bit of sloppiness which can be explained only by the pressures of time upon the staff. Despite the legitimate desire for speed, however, it was not necessary for the pressure to have compromised the work of the Commission. It would have made sense—considering the way in which the world awaited the *Report*—for the Commission to have put out what it did put out, or even something considerably more sketchy, as a preliminary report, just as administrative agencies often hand down tentative decisions. Then the Commission could have assembled its discussion of the evidence and its conclusions carefully and deliberately in the extra six or eight months this would have taken.

In all probability, however, another basic decision of the Commission was even more detrimental to the *Report's* ultimate value than merely the decision to get it out too quickly. This was the decision to write the *Report* not as an impartial historian but, in many places, as an advocate. When I say that the Commission too often was an advocate, I do not, of course, mean to charge it with the distortions and misrepresentations that have characterized the third stage of inquiry. What the Commission did was to put the best face on the evidence it wished to use. Thus in its discussion of the one-bullet theory the Commission marshalled most of the evidence in its favor, but alluded only slightly to the opposing evidence and not at all to the possible importance of the issue. How much better it would have been had the Commission discussed the alternatives and then decided on the one-bullet theory as the most likely of the possibilities, recognizing fully the fact that it was a likelihood, on the basis of all the evidence, somewhat on the order of four out of five rather than, as it implied, ninety-nine out of one hundred. Having done this, the Commission could have discussed how the evidence could be rationalized were the one-bullet theory not true, instead of relying on what is perhaps a technically accurate but by no means obvious truth that the validity of the one-bullet theory was "not necessary" to any of the Commission's major conclusions.

The Commission's advocacy compromised its discussion of other issues as well. It attempted to prove that Oswald's shots were not difficult ones, and concluded, on the basis of his Marine record and several not very successful tests with his rifle, that "Oswald had the capability with a rifle to commit the assassination." It would have been more candid to have pointed out that Oswald had probably just gotten off two "lucky" shots.

The Commission's advocacy is visible at yet another point. Although it had what would seem to be sufficient proof that Oswald had slain Officer Tippit, the Commission nonetheless supported its view with a purported eye-witness identification by one Helen Markham whose credibility had been badly tarnished during the hearings.

It is hard to assess the blame for the Commission's failure to accord due respect to its historical role. Perhaps it lies in the fact that the majority of the Commissioners were lawyers and that lawyers, having reached a conclusion—even honestly and fairly—are accustomed to stating it in the form that most justifies their belief and that convinces onlookers. Perhaps it is due merely to the time pressures that ruled out the longer and more careful discussion that would have been necessary had every point been given full consideration. Perhaps Epstein was partially correct, and the Commission, having decided that no conspiracy existed, tried to fulfill both its duty to its own integrity and its role as an organ of state by writing what it felt to be the truth in the most convincing form.

Whatever the reason, however, it was a serious error, and if it is responsible for even a tiny part of the third stage, the Commissioners have suffered for it.

A third problem, which quite reasonably has worried a great many observers of the controversy, is the failure of the Commission to disclose the full contents of everything before it. To be sure, although certain

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governmental privileges of secrecy do apply in a criminal trial, the strong presumption is in favor of complete disclosure of all admissible evidence. The Warren Commission investigation was far different, however. Unlike the criminal trial, which is generally confined by the rules of evidence to a comparatively narrow range of facts bearing upon well-defined issues, the Warren Commission conducted the broadest possible inquiry into much less well defined problems. As a result, controversy could arise over the disclosure of a great many bits of evidence that, not being usable in a criminal trial, would have created no issue as to disclosure there. Thus, reports on Oswald's behavior in the Soviet Union were at least peripherally relevant to the Commission's investigation. It is not too great a flight of fancy to believe that these reports would have revealed the names of confidential informers in the Soviet Union whose identity the C.I.A. might reasonably prefer to have uncompromised. The question, then, is where the line should have been drawn between the public's right to know and the legitimate demands of secrecy.

Furthermore, the Commission itself made no effort to determine which documents should and which should not be released to the public. Rather than make such determinations itself, the Warren Commission turned over its documents to the National Archives which, after initial confusion, asked the Department of Justice for help in determining which documents should and which should not be released. The Department of Justice, then, in consultation with the investigative agencies involved, worked out a set of general guidelines for this purpose, leaving, of course, the application of these guidelines, on a document by document basis, to the Archivists. These guidelines, as one might expect, were vague.

They provided that statutory and security classifications must be respected but at the same time called on the agencies involved (C.I.A., State Department, *et cetera,* which by law have control of this issue) to reevaluate the security classifications to determine whether the information could be released.

As to unclassified material, the requirements were even more vague—although it is hard to see how one could have drafted specific requirements to cover the multitude of cases. There the object was to prevent the disclosure primarily of documents "which might reveal the identity of confidential sources of information and [thereby] impede or jeopardize future investigations," or which might be a "source of embarrassment to innocent persons because they contain gossip or rumor or details of a personal nature having no significant connection with the assassination." And, although it may be argued that these directions are too inclusive, the guidelines also urged the Archives and the agencies involved to "weigh the reason [for nondisclosure] against the over-riding policy . . . favoring fullest possible disclosure." Moreover, the classifications of documents are to be reviewed after five years and then every subsequent ten years to determine what documents may then be made available.

Although the standards for releasing documents seem, at least on the surface, completely reasonable, there have been incidents that cannot help but damage the public faith in the handling of the whole issue. Before the guidelines were worked out, the Archives refused to make any documents available without the Commission's approval. Unfortunately, by that time the Commission had gone out of existence and its general counsel insisted that he therefore had no jurisdiction to approve anything. Finally, the imbroglio was solved by the Attorney General's Office, which ruled that the Archives had "the authority and obligation to review that material and to determine which of it should be made available to, or withheld from, the public . . ."

Far more important to the third-stage controversies, the X rays and photographs taken at the autopsy of President Kennedy were not initially turned over to the Archives. Apparently—although this is far from certain—they were in the possession of the Kennedy family, which, considering the matters of taste and the probable condition of the President's body, would have preferred not to release them at all. One

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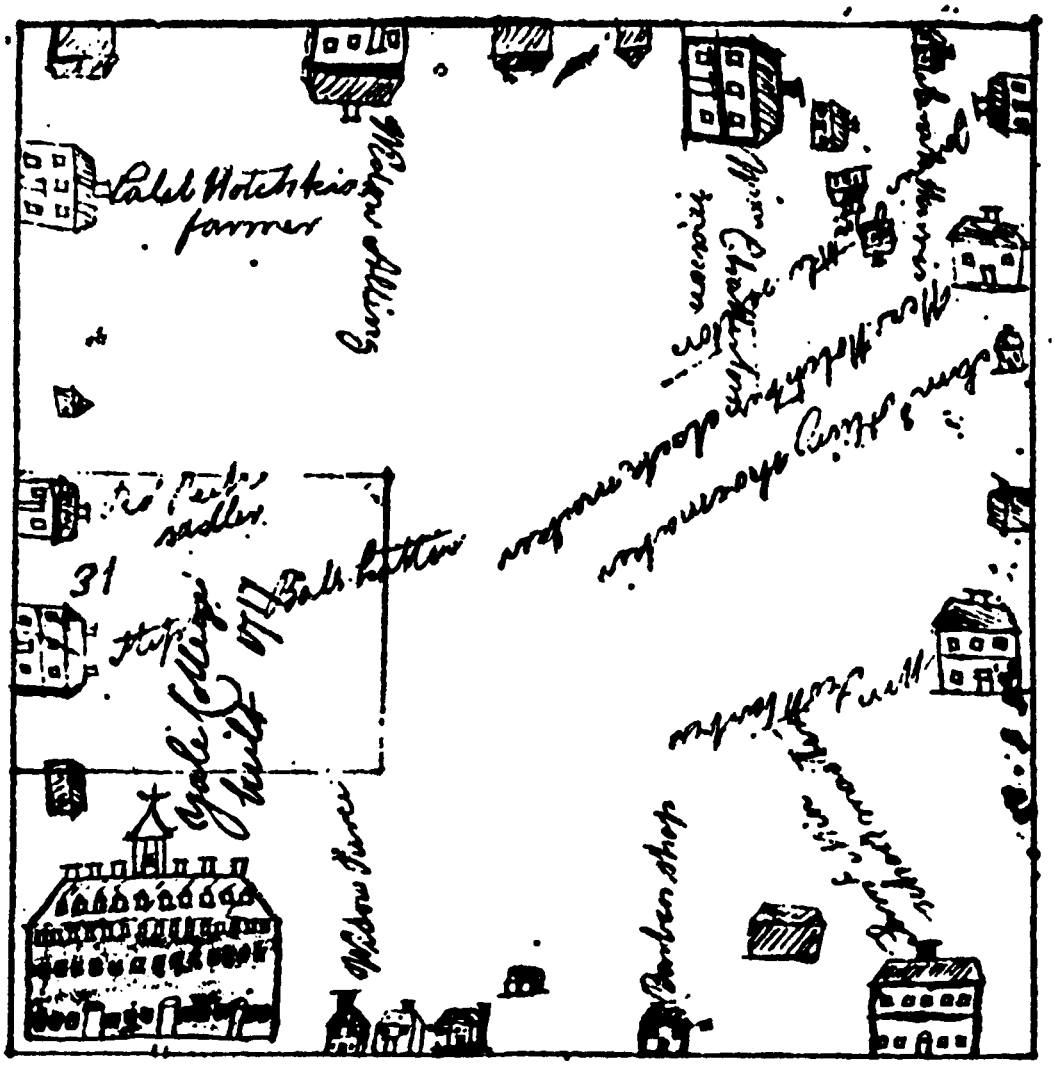

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positive result of the furor is that now the exhibits—which should have been turned over much sooner—are at the Archives, and they have already been made available to the autopsy surgeons (who have announced that their earlier conclusions have thereby been confirmed). Until those exhibits are made public, however, there will be many who doubt this and feel that these photographs are being suppressed to cover the guilt of those who lied about the President's autopsy. The problem of the autopsy photographs is a relatively easy one. If taste were the only reason for not releasing a document, it would be quite clear that all should be made public. Unfortunately, we are in the situation where there are overriding reasons for not releasing some of the documents, but it is equally clear that so long as there exists any evidence that has not been made public, many Americans (especially those who draw no distinction between different organs of government such as the Warren Commission and the National Archives) will view this as powerful evidence of a conspiracy to suppress the truth.

It is obvious, however, that the previously mentioned reasons by no means fully account for the violence and the number of attacks upon the Warren Commission and its investigation. The question then is what does, and although the evidence on this is hardly conclusive, there are several indications. The first and most obvious is that the great body of complaint about the Commission has come from the left. Despite the fact that, from what we know of Oswald, a leftist conspiracy—if there was a political conspiracy at all—is far more likely than a rightist one, almost all the conspiracy allegations have been directed from the left at the right. Men who deplored McCarthyism and all it stood for have been perfectly willing on the basis of incredibly flimsy evidence or no evidence at all to posit theories that Patrolman Tippit was a conspirator in the President's assassination; that the Commissioners lied and suppressed the truth; that a whole host of government officials perjured themselves; and indeed that a network of conspirators far surpassing anything charged during the "Who Promoted Peress?" days now pervades the nation. Even the most baleful excesses of the McCarthy era were not as unfair, irresponsible and reckless as this.

As to what is causing this, one cannot, of course, know for sure. I would suggest, however, that one basic reason has escaped attention: Vietnam. Hatred is not a pretty thing, and the hatred that the extreme left has developed for Lyndon Johnson, although it probably matches that which the right wing had for Franklin D. Roosevelt, is something that is unparalleled in our time. In this context the attacks on the Warren Commission serve the function of blaming one more thing on Lyndon Johnson. After all, the Commission was a governmental body and Johnson not only heads the government, he set up and chose the Commission as well. Thus the widespread feeling that on the Vietnam issue the government has forfeited the citizen's confidence in its integrity need only be extended somewhat to conclude that the Commissioners have merely been loyal to the President in suppressing the truth.

Furthermore, in the background there is an even less pretty thought—indeed one which is very rarely mentioned, at least directly. Popkin slyly refers to those who see the assassination as "a subtle conspiracy involving perhaps some of the Dallas police, the FBI, the right-wing lunatic fringe in Dallas or perhaps even (in rumors I have often heard) Kennedy's successor."

The *Movement*, the newspaper of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, said in its November 1966 issue:

> Several commentators have remarked that the assassination must have been the act of one demented killer because it was not followed by a right-wing takeover. This explanation overlooks the fact that, in some policy areas, Johnson's accession to the presidency constituted a right-wing takeover.

Although it is hardly clear in print, it should be clear for a host of reasons that there are a sizable number of people in the United States who would wish nothing more than to be able, somehow, to pin the blame for

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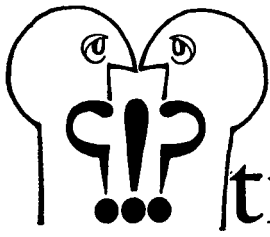

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President Kennedy's assassination on his successor, Lyndon Johnson. For them this would be a solution to the Vietnam involvement; a method of avenging the death of one who after his death (although by no means before it) became something of a hero to them; and finally a means of punishing the President for his transgressions.

To remark that these sentiments are unworthy, and that these tactics can only do harm in the long run to the values those who use such methods purport to support, is beside the point. The fact is that they have in some measure been successful. We have already entered the fourth stage where the nation's opinion-makers are belatedly entering the picture.

The fourth stage, when, for the first time, the organized mass media began paying serious attention to the outcries over the Warren Commission *Report,* can be said to have begun during the week of November 25, 1966. In the same week both *Life* Magazine and the New York *Times* demanded that something be done.

Life, which owns the original of the Zapruder film, reproduced in blown-up color the crucial section, covering the period when the one bullet—or the two bullets—struck President Kennedy and Governor Connally, and entitled its feature story, "A Matter of Reasonable Doubt." Although *Life* did not purport to draw any conclusions as to the validity of the one-bullet theory, the text included both some of the arguments in its favor, as set out by the Commission's former staff member, Arlen Specter, now District Attorney of Philadelphia, and a rebuttal by the *Life* staff. Certainly the piece leaves the average reader with the feeling that the one-bullet theory is the less likely of the possibilities. There are, however, several things to note about *Life*'s story and pictures. First, as *Life* points out, President Kennedy can easily be seen reacting before any reaction by Governor Connally is visible—almost exactly half a second earlier according to the Governor himself. Interestingly, however, the frame the Governor chose as the one in which he was struck, Frame 234, shows him very clearly holding his hand up and completely out of the path the Commission stated the bullet must have followed to strike him on the right wrist. *Life* explains this way:

> Nor can much importance be given to lining up Connally's three wounds—Specter's alignment of holes theory. Having hit a rib would probably have deflected the bullet from a straight course; Connally's wrist could have been almost anywhere and still have been struck by it.

Life may indeed be correct, but it is interesting to note that its staff missed a most relevant question and answer between Specter and Dr. Shaw, who operated on Governor Connally at the Parkland Hospital.

> Specter: "Would the shattering of the rib have had any effect deflecting the path of the bullet in a straight line?"
> Dr. Shaw: "It could have had except in the case of this injury the rib was obviously struck so that not too dense a cancellus portion was carried away by the bullet and probably there was very little in the way of deflection."

In addition, the pictures reproduced by *Life* support the one-bullet theory in another way. If the "alignment of holes theory" is incorrect and the Governor was hit in Frame 234, the bullet that struck the Governor would not only have had to be deflected up to his wrist but back down to his thigh as well. Taken together with the other evidence, the pictures published by *Life* make it perhaps somewhat more likely that, despite his firm belief to the contrary, Governor Connally was struck before he lifted the hand visible in Frame 234 and that his reaction was delayed half a second longer than President Kennedy's. (Anyone who has seen military combat can repeat instances where reactions to or knowledge of wounds have been delayed considerably longer than this period.)

The New York *Times* also contributed relatively little in the way of enlightenment. It quoted one S. M. Holland, a railroad supervisor: "There definitely was a shot from behind that fence" (near the grassy knoll). Mr. Holland's interview with the Warren Commission, however, cast some light on his present views.

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"You had no idea, I take it, that the shots were coming from your area." [Holland was standing on the overpass by the knoll.]

Holland: "No."

"It is your impression that they did not, could not, as far as the sound was concerned."

Holland: "As far as the sound was concerned, they did not."

Moreover, Mr. Holland stated in answer to the usual final question:

"Anything else occurred to you?"

Holland: "No, that is about all of it. If I have been of any help, I'm tickled."

And finally, Mr. Holland, who had attended the Commission's proceedings with a lawyer, was given and accepted the opportunity of reading over his full statement as transcribed by the stenographers before signing it as a true and correct copy.

The *Times* also quoted Malcolm Kilduff, former acting press secretary to President Kennedy, to the effect that the one-bullet theory could not possibly be true because "Governor Connally still has a piece of the bullet in his leg." Unfortunately, Mr. Kilduff was not specific about the size of the fragment in the Governor's leg. Governor Connally's doctor, Dr. Shires, however, testified before the Commission that indeed there was a remnant of the bullet in Governor Connally's leg but that its weight was "in grains—a fraction of a grain, maybe a tenth of a grain—very small." When one considers that there are 437.5 grains in an ounce and that the type of bullet used in the assassination weighed about 161 grains, it is hard to refute the one-bullet theory with a one-tenth of a grain fragment.

Far more important than the new light *Life* and the New York *Times* have shed on the issues has been their call to action. *Life* concluded its article:

The national interest deserves clear resolution of the doubts. A new investigating body should be set up, perhaps at the initiative of Congress. In a scrupulously objective and unhurried atmosphere, without the pressure to give reassurance to a shocked country, it should re-examine the evidence and consider other evidence the Warren Commission failed to evaluate.

The *Times* in its editorial was less specific; it merely called on the members of the Commission and its staff to give "clarification and answers to unanswered questions." The *Times* asserted that the Commission's purpose "is being eroded a little at a time by the clamor," and that "merely more denials by the Commission or its staff are no longer enough."

By now it is clear that something will have to be done. But what?

Probably the most obvious measure would be to release the autopsy photographs and X rays of President Kennedy. Certainly this should be done, but the trouble is that it will accomplish very little. The fact is that there is really no doubt as to what those pictures will show. The evidence, entirely apart from the photographs, that the autopsy surgeons were correct is overwhelming. Of course, the photographs should be examined but if indeed the surgeons were not correct, it is hard to see how they—after examining the photographs only very recently—could still have retained their bravado in the face of imminent exposure.

More important, however, is the fact that this is not where the real controversy lies. Even though we might wish that the autopsy on President Kennedy had been done by more experienced forensic pathologists—a fact that can hardly be blamed on the Commission since the choice of the Bethesda Naval Hospital for the autopsy was made by the late President's wife before the Commission came into existence—the one-bullet theory will almost certainly not be disproved or even made less likely by anything we may now learn about President Kennedy's wounds. If the nature of wounds is to be investigated, Governor Connally's wounds are far more significant on the issue and they are all healed.

This is not to say that a careful congressional investigation, choosing consultants who are experts in their field, could not in the first instance put together a report better than that of the Warren Commission. This, however, is now beside the point.

More important today a congressional committee could and should call a host of

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witnesses who could tighten up a good many loose ends in the investigation. Some witnesses could be called to quiet doubts that already can be seen to be perverse. Others could be called to testify at length on issues where the Commission assumed more knowledge than perhaps many laymen have—such as the fact that high speed rifle bullets do not tumble in unobstructed flight. Yet others could be called to examine with greater care the theories of the third stage—some of which the Commission could not have anticipated. But to move from the gathering of more evidence—which after all is what will be examined by future generations of historians—to a group that would repeat anew the decision process is a great—and unwise—step indeed. To say as *Life* does that the new investigators should "consider other evidence which the Warren Commission failed to evaluate" is somewhat unfair. Although the Commission's report does not make this clear at all, there may well be no evidence that the Commission failed to consider. From all sorts of clues one can convince himself that the Commission evaluated far more evidence than appears at first glance. Certainly it should have made this more apparent, but the call for a formal reevaluation is a call for someone either to disagree with the Commission or to agree with it—and in either case there are a host of problems raised.

For instance, any new commission would have to decide whether to recall the witnesses. If it did not, it could not observe their demeanor—something lawyers regard as extremely important in passing upon credibility. And if it did call the witnesses afresh, time would have so dimmed their memory that, compared with the initial hearings, any second hearing would be more likely to misinform than to inform.

Furthermore, if such a commission is to second-guess the Warren Commission, it presumably would have to be composed of members whose prestige, balance, and reputation for integrity transcended that of the members of the Warren Commission. After U Thant, the Pope and perhaps Arnold Toynbee, however, one has great trouble selecting mortals for this task. Moreover, the fact is that now the trail has gone cold. It is almost inconceivable that any new evidence will be turned up on the one-bullet problem, or for that matter on any other important issue in the case.

Finally, even if a whole new report and new evidence were produced by a new commission, one should ask whether this would quiet the critics of the third stage. My guess is that it would not, and for every point upon which one of those critics was satisfied, there would be others that would place issues—and the integrity of the investigators—more in doubt. The fact is that there is no amount of evidence that cannot be explained if one is willing to envision a conspiracy big enough, and the mine of stories that have been given currency and swallowed until now is a good indication that this conspiracy can be extended as far as necessary. It is sad to acknowledge one more indication that political paranoia is not a monopoly of the far right.

Even apart from this, the hard fact is that the full truth about the assassination—in the sense that there is an objective and verifiable truth—will never be known. Partly this is due to the death of Oswald himself—although if he had remained alive it would certainly have been to his interest to stave off execution by constantly hinting that he knew more than he had told. More to the point, the past may be as unknowable as the future. One may guess at what has already happened with greater and lesser degrees of accuracy, just as one may predict the future with greater and lesser degrees of accuracy. But in many of a nation's affairs, as in many of an individual's, truth can never be known, and even the important questions cannot be settled one way or another beyond a reasonable doubt. This is in many ways a most upsetting statement, and obviously the American people are upset about this issue. In one sense they have every right to be upset. But it is a sign of maturity to recognize that even the most important of issues often cannot be resolved to a certainty.

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THE SINS OF THE FATHERS: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes. *By Frederick C. Crews. Oxford University Press. $6.75.*

Reviewed by HENRY A. MURRAY

Although always a fastidious stylist, Hawthorne was not always writing in the service of the same self. In his house of mind dwelt several kindred yet distinctive selves, some consonant and some dissonant, some on the front side bathed in an "Indian-summer sunlight," as Melville discerned in 1850, and some residing in the rear or in the cellar, shrouded in blackness, "ten-times black." Corresponding to this most striking division in his nature, Hawthorne has had from the beginning both his chiefly light-siding and his chiefly dark-siding appreciative readers.

The thesis of the light-siders, as Evert Duyckinck, the Episcopalian, succinctly stated it in 1841, has been that Hawthorne is most worthy of our homage as a preacher of "lay sermons, full of hope and tranquility." Submerged for a while, this thesis has been recently revived and ethereally inflated by a claque of sanguine critics who seem bent on pushing forward the backward-looking romancer and allegorist as a sustaining buoy of Christian grace and inspiration for the hapless many who are floundering in today's sea of dissolving moral values. In addition to all this, we have lately been presented with at least three extensive biographical exhibits of the correlative and reinforcing thesis, the substance of which, in briefest terms, is that the self-insulated, "shyest grape" of Salem, Massachusetts, was healthily and actively in touch and tune with his social and cultural environment.

Here is a coupling of cheerful propositions, to be sure, but do they veritably float? Is their combined buoyancy sufficient to detach the author of "The Haunted Mind" from the "tomb" and "dungeon" (as he called them) over which he hovered for so long, and turn his "real Me" into a pious, gladdening lover of mankind? And what will be the buoyancy of this coupling, its life expectancy, after suffering the rapier thrusts of deflating facts and mockery that serve as an impediment-clearing prelude to this present work by the knowledgeable and incisive, dark-siding professor of English at Berkeley, California?

In this finely wrought and finely written book one finds, systematically and forcefully expounded by Professor Crews, the latest, most drastic and explicit version of the dark-siders' antithetical proposition. First of all, in line with a long procession of readers ranging from Melville to Professor H. H. Waggoner, this version states that the eminence of Hawthorne rests upon the various, enticing, subtle, ironic, cunning, symbolic, thematic and sometimes candid and outspoken ways in which this gifted writer reveals to intuitive receptors how very far and with what unprecedented cullings he pursued his avowed intention of "burrowing, to his utmost ability, into the depths of our common human nature, for the purposes of psychological romance." Crucial to this thesis is the generally acknowledged fact that Hawthorne's persistent burrowings carried him, quite early in his career, through the black veil of puritan defenses and into the underlying world of enormities and guilt, a region of

HENRY A. MURRAY is professor emeritus of clinical psychology at Harvard University and a former director of the Harvard Psychology Clinic. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the SCHOLAR.

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his own mind as well as of the minds of certain others, that he preempted for voyeuristic explorations in search of hidden motives, of depraved imaginations and unpardonable sins—evils to be exposed to shame and censure. It is from Hawthorne's absorption in this macabre and ghostly region of experience that his unique drawing power, his black magic, his witchcraft, is primarily derived. In league with this view of the master craftsman as a psychologist of extraordinary depth is the conviction (which Professor Crews shares with a number of earlier biographers and critics) that Hawthorne suffered more or less from some sort of obsessional neurosis: he must first have been the victim and only later the acute detector—if not the independent discoverer—of fateful, involuntary and unconscious mental processes.

In this polemical book, Professor Crews's chosen sphere of concern does not embrace the aims of a biographer or the full range of functions of a comprehensive, evenhanded literary critic. Having an exacting job to do, a particular axe to grind, he has neither the space nor the inclination to do justice to those more playful, elfish, affectionate, or remarkably objective selves on the healthy side of Hawthorne's household; and he cuts through the "lay sermons" in accord with D. H. Lawrence's original apperception of them as little more than the "smarm" (the decorous genteel sentiments and conventional goody-goody moralizings) with which the "blue-eyed darling" candy-coated the otherwise-too-shocking diabolisms of his shadow self. As Professor Crews properly points out (with two phrases culled from *The Scarlet Letter*): "In the typical Hawthorne tale there is a jarring dissonance between the 'sweet moral blossom' that is served up with an obliging flourish and the 'human frailty and sorrow' that compose the story." The light-siders' misapprehensions are largely attributed to the prevailing "duplicity" (Lawrence again) of this author, a man whose verve and nerve were nearly always below par.

Professor Crews's line of intentionality is composed of two major strands, the more continuous of which from start to finish is that of subjecting products of Hawthorne's imagination (many of his stories and all of his novels in a roughly chronological order) to a thorough psychoanalytic treatment—minute scrutiny and penetrating depth interpretations—and by this method sooner or later to arrive at the underlying generative source not only of the majority of his themes but of his more intractable obsessions. In the advancement of this endeavor Professor Crews—a doctor of letters, not of medicine—manifests remarkable professional vigilance, perceptiveness, learning and ingenuity, especially in bringing to bear whatever pertinent resources orthodox Freudian theory and practice have to offer. Here is a son in whom the father of psychoanalysis would assuredly be well pleased. Professor Crews's second strand of intentionality, which is less zealously and systematically pursued, is that of estimating, so far as possible, to what extent his author on the couch was conscious of the nature and significance of the various involuntary processes—say, repression, displacement, reaction formation, return of the repressed—and of the targets of the various instinctive dispositions—say, sexual, voyeuristic, punitive and sadistic—that are recurrently exhibited, clearly or obscurely, in his symbolic and allegorical romances. More specifically, Professor Crews is out to show—and he does show with numerous telling illustrations—on what grounds Hawthorne deserves to be prized and honored as perhaps the earliest unmistakable forerunner in the field of literature of Dr. Sigmund Freud, a genius whom he resembled in several notable respects.

During the course of his proficient and precise dissections of his analysand's imaginations, Professor Crews goes further than any of his literary predecessors in exposing the subtler dynamics, the latent content, of the thematic substance of a number of selected stories, especially, let me say, of "Alice Doane's Appeal" and of "Roger Malvin's Burial." But despite

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all the clearheaded professor's brilliant intuitions, despite the seductiveness of his ordered reasonings, this empathic reader must confess that he was chilled, almost to the marrow, by the sense and then the certainty that he was being guided in story after story—sometimes by very questionable hunches—to the same commonplace conclusion: the conclusion that in the last analysis nearly all of the rich symbolic stuff in Hawthorne is explainable in terms of an unresolved Oedipus complex—that genetically-given catchall to which orthodoxy relegates by fiat the whole enormous population of neurotics. The surmise that the terminus of each elegant dissection, as well as the finale of the whole inquiry, was preordained from the beginning by the analyst's overconfident attachment to this single formula is supported by the demonstrable fact that Professor Crews has overlooked so much—so much that stems from a reversal of mother love, so much that is more prevalent and potent than parricide, so much, in short, that is essential to any complex "figure in the carpet," that could deservedly be accepted as Hawthorne's distinctive signature.

But this is not the place to debate the professional question of how many Hawthornian themes can stand on the head of an Oedipus complex; and since it would take a thick document to defend a quite different representation of the figure in Hawthorne's carpet of creations, I must cleave mutely to the hope that Professor Crews, with his fertile imagination no longer confined to an old rut, will someday reexamine both the critically important stories and the pertinent biographical facts that are not included in *this* book, and, after reweighing whatever reckless utterances he has permitted himself here, will write a *second* book, in celebration this time not so much of the authority of Freud as of the genius of Hawthorne. For, even as a psychologist, Hawthorne surpassed the great explorer in a few insightful ways, one of which was to perceive and to acknowledge the mutilating and deforming effects of (sadistically tinged) dissections of another person's character: for instance,

> if we take the freedom to put a friend under our microscope, we thereby insulate him from many of his true relations, magnify his peculiarities, inevitably tear him into parts, and, of course, patch him very clumsily together again. What wonder, then, should we be frightened by the aspect of a monster, which, after all . . . may be said to have been created mainly by ourselves.

A Book To Be Cherished

MODERN AMERICAN USAGE. *By Wilson Follett. Hill and Wang. $7.50.*

Reviewed by A. M. TIBBETTS

The National Council of Teachers of English held one of its huge meetings in Houston recently. After one series of speeches on grammar and usage, a college teacher in the audience arose and stated: "The new Follett is a vicious book." The speakers had not mentioned Follett; the only reference to the book was the program chairman's idle remark that he had been reading it a few days earlier.

That so decorous a book on English usage should call forth bitterness in a professional meeting is not surprising to anyone who has been in the middle of the Great Linguistic War of the last ten years. The War has spread beyond professordom, and tempers are frayed. Drop a single word or name—like *purist, linguist, Fowler, Barzun, Follett*—into a quiet area behind the lines and suddenly soldiers appear, gnashing their teeth. Follett's *Modern American Usage* was published at the wrong (or right) time, when the warriors on both sides were just recovering from deep wounds inflicted in the big fight over Webster's *Third.* Follett, judging from the reviews already published, is the new battleground on a smaller scale. One is already expected to be for or against the book. If one takes any middle ground, he

A. M. TIBBETTS teaches rhetoric and literature at the University of Illinois.

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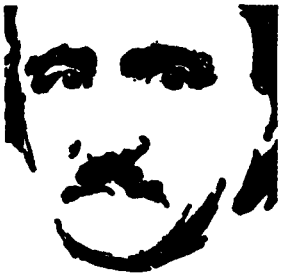

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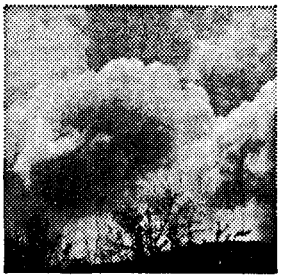

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can expect to be shot at from both sides. Although a linguistic conservative, I must occupy a small amount of this middle ground. I generally approve of the book, but must state that it does have a few flaws.

According to the publisher, *Modern American Usage* was "edited and completed by Jacques Barzun, in collaboration with" six other experts. Since I can't tell what any of these persons did to or for the book, I here lay all praise and blame on Follett.

Physically, *Modern American Usage* is divided into four parts: an explanatory preface, an introduction, the lexicon and appendixes. In his preface, Follett has usefully discussed the plan of his book and given the reader an "Inventory of Main Entries in the Lexicon" that is divided into four parts headed Diction, Idiom, Syntax and Style. The Inventory is a useful device in itself. The introduction, which runs about thirty pages, is one of the best things of its kind ever written; and it ought to be required reading for any man who puts his words into print.

The theme of the introduction is that in language man is a choice-making animal. As such, says Follett, man should be aware of the available choices and requirements of the language: "Actually, language is made logical and clear by observing the norms of grammar and syntax; and it is made precise, vivid, and easy ('readable') by respecting the demands of idiom, connotation, tone, rhythm, and the other more fugitive virtues." Follett rightly identifies the "worst enemy of modern languages" as man's "universal desire to show off" by using the empty polysyllabisms of science and scholarship. And he makes the necessary point that the new jargons are pedantic in a way that those of the old, simple trades (sailing, farming and stealing) were not.

A major mistake of the self-conscious user of words is that of falling into *purism*, a term for which Follett gives an excellent definition: "Purism is another form of the pedantic. It singles out in the language of science and scholarship what is

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literal and minute, as pedantry does the abstract and long-winded. Purism haggles over trifles and refuses to know when errors and confusions no longer matter." The proper use of linguistic self-consciousness is described by Follett in an introductory section of seven pages called "On the Need of An Orderly Mind," in which the principle is beautifully laid out "that where the orderly mind is not continuously in charge—before, during, and after the act of writing—all the signs and gestures of sound organization will not rule out blunder and chaos."

Most of the material in the lexicon proves that Follett had not only an orderly mind but also a sensible one. "The call for nicety," he writes in the article on pedantry, "is always to be met by the question of relevance—what's the point?" *Like* is commonly misused, as even English teachers know; Follett makes the necessary point that many writers, in their desperate attempt to keep from misusing *like,* commit "evasions" that "are as indefensible as the misuses of the word." Occasionally in his discussion of disputed usages, he finds that disputes are to some degree pointless. Quiller-Couch notwithstanding, Follett remarks, the word *case* has valuable uses—"*in case of fire* is correct, idiomatic, and unimprovable." The "overlapping forms" of *lie* and *lay* "cause more trouble than they are worth, and trip up even careful speakers." In his article on the pronunciation of foreign proper names, Follett suggests that we should not try to utter the original sounds but merely "give the nearest equivalent, with English sounds and without straining." He admits that some disputes cannot be resolved. Of the *that . . . that* construction (discussed under *"that, which,* relative") he says: "The conflicting arguments lie deep in the structure of the language and may never find a satisfactory resolution."

To be successful, the writer on usage needs to have a sharp eye for error and a sharp wit with which to attack those who, through carelessness or stupidity, make errors. Follett has both the eye and the wit.

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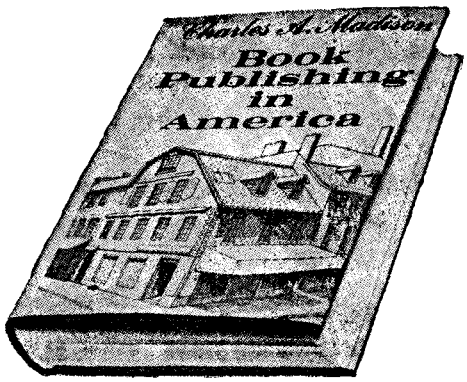

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He makes, for example, an excellent comment on the misuse of *as* for *since* or *because* and notes accurately that this use of *as* "is always feeble." He says of the present vague use of *concept* (the concept of garbage collecting, the concept of air power—my own examples): "The vogue of *concept* as a word that will dignify any idea from a passing fancy to a full-fledged plan has blurred—probably forever—a useful distinction." He catches neatly the "absurdity" of the phrase *personal lives* ("as if we had some other kind") and adds that "one begins to suspect that *personal* is being substituted for *private,* to avoid the suggestion of secrecy or withdrawal from the group."

English usage is a complex subject, and authorities (being men) are imperfect. It is not surprising that one can occasionally argue with Follett's judgment. In his article on *center around,* he makes every argument against the phrase except the central one—that it is vague and almost meaningless. He argues against the silly but idiomatic use of *between* in "a pause between each word"; growls against the common but harmless misuse of *cohort* to mean partner or accomplice; and seriously suggests that *rationale* should be pronounced *"ray-shun-ay-lee,* with the accent on the third syllable." He wastes considerable space on the *who-whom* business and devotes over twenty pages of an appendix to *shall* and *will,* lost causes both. In the latter two articles, Follett perhaps becomes, according to his own definition of the word, a purist who refuses to know "when errors and confusions no longer matter."

But these errors in judgment, if they are errors, do not matter very much when one considers the general excellence of *Modern American Usage.* Good books on usage are remarkably difficult to write, a fact that caviling critics obstinately and typically refuse to recognize. *Modern American Usage* will not replace Fowler (perhaps nothing could), but it will nicely complement that work. At the national meeting of English teachers I mentioned earlier, a professor bitterly stated

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that "we can have no faith in a modern theorist who bases his idea of usage on a book [Fowler] written forty years ago." Besides showing his ignorance of the fact that Fowler was recently revised, the professor was also displaying contempt for past intelligence. Any intelligent ideas about language, written in any time, should be cherished. As we have cherished Fowler, we would be wise to cherish Follett.

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Reviewed by EDWARD T. CHASE

A recent *New Yorker* cartoon depicts a chic upper-middle-class wife commenting to her husband over the newspapers, "I don't know a darn thing about Walter Heller. I just like to know he's there." He is "there" indeed; he has been ever since his 1961 appointment as chief of the Council of Economic Advisers; and, although he is no longer in the Administration, one is aware of his presence in all important national economic deliberations. What's more, the celebrated Heller Plan for state sharing of federal tax revenues has become a dominating issue in public affairs. Keynes, Galbraith and now Heller have been instrumental in dramatizing the truth—to the general public as distinct from the academic—that political economy is *the* core study if one wishes to understand the shape of the modern world or hopes ever to change it. So, far from being dismal, what Walter Heller has been up to is highly dramatic.

✪ EDWARD T. CHASE is a social critic and editor who contributes to many magazines including *Harper's, Book Week,* the *New Republic,* the *Atlantic Monthly,* the *Reporter,* the *Nation, Commonweal, Dissent.* He is a member of the Columbia University Seminar on Technology and Social Change, and a member of the Advisory Council of the Society for the History of Technology.

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Much of this comes through plainly in his new book, the three Godkin Lectures (painstakingly worked over and revised) that Heller gave at Harvard last spring. But, even though he is unusually confidential, even chatty, there would have been improprieties had he indulged himself in candid comment about the background political context of these issues. For example, he has been sharply criticized (by J. K. Galbraith, Leon Keyserling, Robert Lekachman, the liberal left) for opting for the tax cut as the remedy for fiscal drag instead of a comparable amount of additional federal spending for domestic welfare programs. The consequence, his critics emphasize, was a vast increase in the income of the private sector, overwhelmingly for corporations and for the wealthy, a deference to the ancient doctrine of consumer sovereignty with a vengeance, $16 billion worth. As a result corporate profits after taxes doubled, while the overall national output and real wages increased by one third. The rich indeed got richer, the poor got only a little richer (factory workers improved their real incomes by a mere 18%). Public services were not directly touched at all.

Yet Heller is persuasive on the record in this book, and altogether compelling in other writings and in conversations, in his insistence that, given Congress' complexion and mood, the political prospect in 1963-64 for approval of vastly increased spending for worthy unmet domestic needs was all but hopeless. It was convulsion enough when President Kennedy and the Establishment finally became convinced that deficit financing would accomplish its paradoxes of economic growth, larger federal revenues, balanced budget and reduced unemployment.

Heller also has been roundly taken to task (notably by Professor Charles Killingsworth of Michigan State) for allegedly depreciating the evidence of structural impediments to full employment, principally automation, and relying entirely upon stimulation of aggregate demand. Killingsworth's is a formidable analysis, showing that technological

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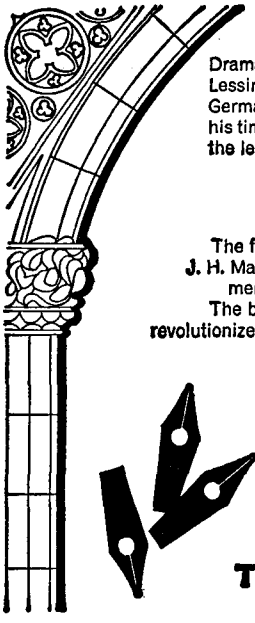

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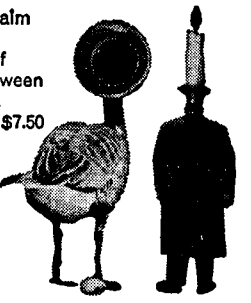

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change is in truth altering the conditions of and diminishing the chances for employment in major sectors of the economy. Up to now, though, aggregate demand expedients have in fact worked successfully. But the truth is that Heller did recognize the validity of much of the structuralists' argument and was the crucial figure in the Kennedy Administration in advocating that key therapy, the anti-poverty war. He so urged, as he reveals, the moment he was assured that the tax cut would be approved. He saw this "structuralist" expedient as an essential complementary measure to achieve an unemployment rate below 4%. Late in 1963 he organized the effort within his Council of Economic Advisers to devise appropriate measures to break through the vicious poverty circle (namely: poverty demoralizes, which in turn leads to low mobility, poor health and bad education, which in turn limits earning potential, which in turn results in poverty *ad infinitum*). What came out of this effort eventually was the structuralist program for rehabilitation and prevention embodied in the Economic Opportunity Act. What's more, Heller was also a powerful advocate of earlier structural programs, the Manpower Development and Training Act and the Area Redevelopment Administration, both focused on retraining.

The present book, detailing the thinking and politicking behind all this, is Heller's first since leaving Washington and is thus, first of all, of prime historical significance. Many readers, however, will value the book more for the lucidity with which it explains the technicalities of "the new economics." Heller sees the nub of the new economics as a process in what is called "gap closing." The specific gap is the difference between the *actual* level of the gross national product and its *potential* level at "full" employment (4% unemployment) and "full" (92%) use of productive facilities. The step to close the gap in 1964 was a tax cut, arrived at by calculations based on long-observed stable relationships between income and consumption and investment, along with accurate forecasts of multiplier and accelerator effects. It worked just about exactly as predicted. Heller and his colleagues have every right to feel pleased that they demonstrated unequivocally that with a bit of luck the right flexible fiscal policies (cutting or increasing taxes as circumstances dictate) can provide *controlled economic expansion* with its benefactions of high employment, increased revenues, stable price levels and, wonder of wonders, balanced budgets. I say bit of luck because, in reality, any major acceleration in technological change (say, a vast increase in computerized automation) or radically arbitrary insistence upon much higher prices or much higher wages in major industries would reveal that fiscal strategy, for all its effectiveness, has real limitations in a free economy. The 1966 breakdown of the wage-price guidelines has shown us this. Heller acknowledges as much in his preface, in which he writes that policy now centers on "enlarging the economy's non-inflationary potential."

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ture that is most significant for current policy. For here is the definitive exposition of the Heller-Joseph Pechman (of Brookings) plan to return surplus tax revenues to the states. It is an appealing rationale. At existing tax and growth rates there is now an *automatic* growth in federal revenues of about $7 billion yearly. We must thus "declare the fiscal dividend," in Heller's words—that is, spend it usefully, or the dividend won't continue to develop. For the economy would slow down under fiscal drag. Since the states and localities have relatively inelastic tax revenues (largely from property, sales, excise taxes) but have become overwhelmed with burgeoning metropolitan problems, logic dictates the surplus in federal coffers be returned to them. Besides, traditional state and local responsibilities like education, health, *et cetera*, now involve national interests. What could be more important to the strengthening of federalism and the achievement of the Great Society than this ingenious scheme!

In fact, however, the scheme has been heatedly endorsed and heatedly denounced, and, ironically enough, the denunciations are coming from the Administration and the ideologues of the Great Society, the support from the conservative Republican leadership. The latter see the plan as a way to bypass Washington through unconditional grants to the states. The critics, on the other hand, fear that such grants in the hands of inept stale bureaucrats will produce waste and the perpetuation of failed policies. Heller is distressed by these developments. Quite rightly, he will not concede that such grants will allow for violation of national law, such as the Civil Rights Act ban on federal funding of programs permitting racial discrimination. Nor, indeed, is there any inherent reason why such grants could not be conditional, for example in education or health, on meeting certain national minimum standards.

So Walter Heller is still "there" in 1967, as the 90th Congress moves along, in a most important sense: his plan is the crux of a tense new struggle over federal aid. For the contestants, surely, this is the right book at the right time. It is also an indispensable book for anyone who wants to understand how policy has been arrived at in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

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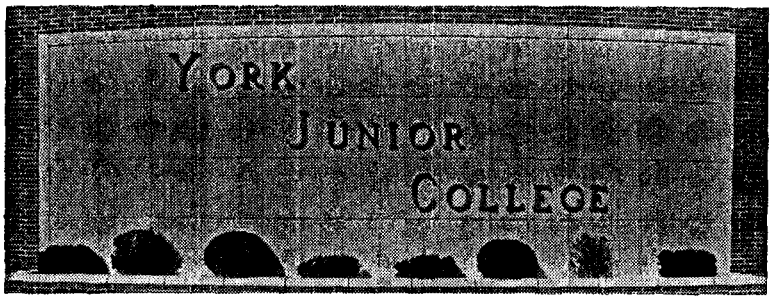

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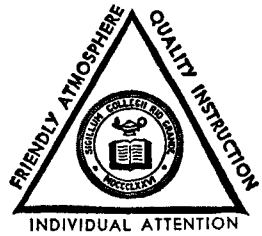

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The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles that have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Because of space limitations we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*
—EDITOR

Why I should add my plaudits for Daniel Bell's "Sociodicy. . . ." [AS: Autumn, 1966] is beyond my comprehension; for I have neither the wit nor the learning to comprehend, let alone to digest and criticize. To disqualify myself even further, there was a point in the reading when I felt I was enjoying one of the greatest works of pseudo intellectualism since Richard Rovere attempted to win back his former friends, not in the article cited by Mr. Bell but in his hilariously footnoted apology therefor in *Esquire.*

Despite my lack of competence and perspective (several trips to the unabridged dictionary were necessary to convince me I had enjoyed far too "chilly" a view of "chiliastic" and knew nothing of "pneumatomachian") and my nearly overwhelming admiration for Mr. Bell's essay, I must profess a slight doubt about its effects, especially concerning the matter that originally attracted me to it, its catchy title. I fear this use of sociodicy is an unfortunate perversion for one of the cleverest terms ever invented by man, the English version for Leibnitz' total denial of the prodigal son, which in English has such fine overtones of theological idiocy.

Although Mr. Bell has more than the tip of his tongue in his cheek and makes a heroic effort to save the situation with some superb definitions at the conclusion, he has not only created so great and needed a word but has done it so engagingly that I fear the term (and its suggested brethren) may come in for more current usage than any of the misnomers or halfnomers he discusses. If this occurs, he may well have given value by association to Leibnitz' self-damning term, which has so long rested in its own sterile limbo, and may once again release upon the world the idea that God is responsible for justice and man has nothing to do but enjoy Eden, knowing neither good nor evil.

JACK STONE
Evansville, Indiana

I agree with Hiram Haydn's reference [Spring, 1966] to Buckminster Fuller as "that astonishing man." Mr. Fuller has remarkable insights. I have the highest respect and admiration for Harlow Shapley, the renowned astronomer, and will not challenge his supposition (some twenty years ago) that Mr. Fuller was "the brightest man alive." But the editors at that historic and fatal meeting may have had a point in calling him "eccentric."

In his "Vision 65 Summary Lecture" (page 211 of the Spring issue), Mr. Fuller said: "The *brightest* star that we use in our navigation is Rigil Kentaurus. And Rigil Kentaurus is *four and one-half million light years away* . . . Quite probably Rigil Kentaurus hasn't been 'there' in the sky for three and one-half million years." Again, on page 212: "The nearest star Sun is ninety-two million miles away and the *next brightest* Rigil Kentaurus *is not even there.*" (Italics supplied.)

This is indeed "astonishing" to a credulous reader, when he recalls that others writing with presumed authority have assured him that our Milky Way Galaxy is only one hundred thousand light years across and the Andromeda Galaxy is about two million light years away; that Rigil Kentaurus (navigator's name for Alpha Centauri) is only *4.3 light years away* and actually is the *nearest* of all bright stars, but is *not the brightest* but the third brightest, after Sirius and Canopus, not counting our Sun.

To quote again from Mr. Haydn's editorial, "I have the shivery feeling" that much of what I have learned about the stars "may well be obsolete."

Best wishes for continued and greater success of your wonderful magazine.

JOHN M. SHEFFEY
Westfield, New Jersey

* * *

MR. FULLER replies: Mr. Sheffey's letter is a real "shocker" to me. Through a great many years I have disciplined myself never to prepare

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lectures. I have learned that it is possible to think aloud. The system has merit, for it forces me to reassess the inventory of concepts and relationships accruing to our progressive experiences. Most of the data that I use comes from my own experimental work and I am confident of my figures. I always announce to my audiences that I am speaking without notes and therefore all data is from the memory bank. As in all conversation, unchecked concepts emerge spontaneously. The errors I made in this instance are preposterous. In dealing with astronomy the errors readily become astronomically magnified.

The only thing that can be said in my favor is that the point I was making would have been equally substantiated if I had left out the word "million" and had said only "four and one-half light years." The point I was trying to make was that of *non-simultaneity* of the events witnessed in the sky. If I had left out the "million" I would not have gone on with the afterthought that the star probably had not been there for three and one-half million years. Checking back on my authorities, I find that—at least—I was right that a star of such magnitude does tend to burn out in a million years.

I am not even an amateur astronomer, although I read a great deal reported by the astronomers. As I am a sailor and navigator, I know Mr. Sheffey is extraordinarily right about Sirius being the brightest star next to the Sun. There are times and ship positions when Rigil Kentaurus is the brightest to be seen.

My talks are tape-recorded and transcribed. I then try to convert the spoken pattern into visually acceptable syntax. In the case of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR article, I went to Africa before the transcription clean-up phase. If I had had time I would have made a thorough check of the data. Also, I had a very short time to work with galley proof and I tried not to upset the format and line content any more than necessary. The only consolation I can find is that I have not been inundated with notices of other glaring misstatements consequent to faults in my method of communication processing.

My deep apology to the Board of Editors and to all of the SCHOLAR's readers. While eager to make amends for the erroneous quantities employed in my address, I hope it is clear to all that the fundamental meanings are not altered.

* * *

When I read August Heckscher's article on Vietnam in the Autumn issue, I could not help thinking of La Fontaine's fable, *"Le Coche et la Mouche."* A second reading did not soften my judgment. I heartily agree therefore with Joseph Bowen's letter in the Winter issue.

Unfortunately, those who undermine our country's policy will continue to delay negotiations, cause needless casualties on both sides and make the achievement of peace more difficult, always, of course, in the names of democracy, the Constitution and humanitarianism. I believe that everyone in the United States is in favor of our getting out of Vietnam; the only problem (and it is a baffling one) is how to do it.

ANDREW L. MATTE
Summit, New Jersey

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